

De Larsa à Mari (I) : nouvelles incantations paléo-babyloniennes

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Abstract. *In addition to the small group of well-known Old-Babylonian incantations dealing with diseases that have fallen from the sky, there is now a complete new manuscript dated from the 19th century BC and most probably originating from the kingdom of Larsa. This is the oldest known version. Its particularities are the subject of a short analysis.*

Dans tout le Proche-Orient, là où s'est pratiquée l'écriture cunéiforme, des formules d'incantations en sumérien, akkadien, hourrite et élamite ont circulé et ont été retrouvées parmi bien d'autres genres de documents¹. Aux quelques exemplaires encore inédits

* Liste des abréviations : ARM = Archives Royales de Mari ; BiOr = Bibliotheca Orientalis ; CIPOA = Cahiers de l'Institut de Proche-Orient Ancien ; CM = Cuneiform Monograph ; CUSAS = Cornell University Studies in Assyriological and Sumerology ; HTS = Hartford Theological Seminary ; JCS = Journal of Cuneiform Studies ; JNES = Journal of Near Eastern Studies ; MHEM = Mesopotamian History and Environment, Memoirs ; OBO = Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis ; RA = Revue d'Assyriologie ; SANER = Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records ; SEAL = Source of Early Akkadian Literature ; WZKM = Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes ; YOS = Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts ; UIOM = University of Illinois, Oriental Museum.

¹ Elles sont utilement regroupées et rééditées par M. Streck et N. Wasserman dans SEAL (<https://www.seal.uni-leipzig.de/>). N. Wasserman a récemment édité de nouveaux exemplaires : « Labor Pains, Difficult Birth, Sick Child : Three Old Babylonian Incantations from a Private Collection », *BiOr* 75, 2018, p. 14-26. Pour le détail et les références, je me permets donc de renvoyer à cette base de données.

provenant de Mari qui seront prochainement édités², il faut en ajouter d'autres de Babylonie³.

1. Formule contre les maladies tombées du ciel (région de Larsa)

CUNES 48-06-263 est une petite tablette dont format et écriture sont typiques du royaume du Larsa à l'époque de Sūmu-El (1894-1866) et Nūr-Adad (1865-1850)⁴. Le texte, plus tassé au bas du revers de la tablette, est complet. L'incantation traite d'un thème bien connu du genre, celui d'une cohorte de maladies venues du ciel pour s'attaquer aux troupeaux et aux enfants. Ce groupe, composé au sens strict pour l'époque paléo-babylonienne de YOS 11, 8 et n°9, HTS 2 (JCS 9) et UIOM 1059 (JCS 9), a d'abord été étudié par A. Goetze⁵, qui n'a pas connu l'exemplaire de Mari M.15289* paru seulement en 1994⁶. Bien plus récemment N. Wasserman a consacré plusieurs importantes études à ce sujet⁷.

² Pour une présentation générale, M. Guichard, « Incantations à Mari », J.-M. Durand & A. Jacquet éd., *Divination et magie dans les cultures du Proche-Orient*, CIPOA 3, 2010, p. 23-40.

³ J'ai retrouvé ces documents au sein de la collection des tablettes conservées temporairement à l'Université de Cornell aux USA. Je tiens à remercier chaleureusement J.-M. Durand qui m'a confié l'édition des incantations de Mari et D. Owen pour sa permission d'étudier des textes de l'Université de Cornell (Ithaca). Toute l'équipe qui était sur place a été d'une aide efficace en particulier Laura Kelly-Johnson. Les remarquables clichés photographiques ont été réalisés sous sa supervision. Les deux missions américaines que j'ai effectuées ont été rendues possibles grâce au soutien financier apporté par D. Charpin à qui j'exprime toute ma gratitude.

⁴ Pour ces rois, cf. D. Charpin, « Histoire Politique du Proche-Orient Amorrite (2002-1595) », dans P. Attinger, W. Sallaberger & M. Wäfler (éd.), *Mesopotamien. Die altbabylonische Zeit*, OBO 160/4, Fribourg / Göttingen, p. 75-78 et 101-103.

⁵ A. Goetze, « An incantation Against Diseases », JCS 9, 1955, p. 8-18.

⁶ A. Cavigneaux, « Magica Mariana », RA 88, 1994, p. 155-161. Le texte est désormais complet grâce à un « join » effectué par J.-M. Durand.

⁷ « Between Magic and Medicine—apropos of an Old Babylonian Therapeutic Text against kurārum Disease », CM 36, 2007, p. 40-61 et « maškadum and other zoonotic Diseases in Medical and Literary Akkadian Sources », BiOr 69, 2012, p. 426-436.

Aucun des exemplaires connus n'est identique ce qui laisse penser qu'il n'y avait pas au début du deuxième millénaire de texte de référence fixe⁸. Le texte est structuré par des phrases toutes faites⁹ ou des formules malléables constamment recyclées et modifiées. Le plan d'ensemble suit un schéma fixe qui peut être synthétisé ainsi :

1. liste des maladies ; 2. la chute du ciel ; 3. la montée de la fièvre qui affecte le troupeau et les enfants ; 4. l'appel aux divinités ; 5. l'éviction des maladies ou la guérison.

Entre 2 et 3, peut s'insérer un motif supplémentaire. C'est le cas dans YOS 11, 8 : *an-na-nu-um er-se-tum šu-nu-ti im-ḥu-ur* « Ici la Terre a reçu ceux-ci » (etc.) ou la version trouvée à Mari (M.15289) : *im-qú-ut sí-ka-tum in-na-pi-ih i-sa°-t[um]* « La variole est tombée et il y a eu poussée de fièvre¹⁰ ». Il faut peut-être compter la ligne 8 de CUNES 48-06-263 comme un semblable ajout. Tous ont comme point commun d'évoquer l'arrivée sur terre des maux immédiatement après leur chute. Mais au vu des dissemblances, du manque de phrase formulaire¹¹ et du caractère facultatif du motif, force est de constater qu'il s'agit surtout de lignes improvisées, fruits de l'inspiration du moment ou emprunts à d'autres contextes.

Il y a entre ces incantations autant, sinon plus, de différences que de similitudes. Néanmoins les exemplaires HTS 2 (Goetze, JCS 9, p. 8-11) et UIOM 1059 (Goetze, JCS 9, p. 8-11) sont les plus proches parallèles de la nouvelle incantation. L'origine de la plupart des documents semble être Larsa ou ses environs. Le lieu de découverte

⁸ Sur le sujet, G. Barjamovic, « Contextualizing Tradition: Magic, Literacy and Domestic Life in Old Assyrian Kanesh », SANER 9, 2015, p. 72.

⁹ Comme la formule classique *mannam lušpur*, cf. l'étude de référence de W. Farber, « *Mannam Lušpur Ana Enkidu*: some New Thoughts about an Old Motif », JNES 49, 1990, p. 299-321 ; G. Cunningham ('*Deliver me from Evil*'. *Mesopotamian Incantations 2500-1500 BC*, Studia Pohl: Series Maior 17, 1997, p. 121.

¹⁰ Lit. « le feu s'est embrasé. »

¹¹ Excepté le cas de l'exemplaire de Mari, puisqu'il est parallèle à un passage de l'incantation contre la variole Sikkatum YOS 11, 7 : 2-3 : *in-na-pi-ih i-ša-a-ṛtum¹, sí-ik-ka-tum im-ta-qú-ut*.

de CUNES 48-06-263 est inconnu, mais on peut formuler l'hypothèse que la tablette était à l'origine associée aux « archives » du 19^e siècle de Rahabum ville du royaume de Larsa proche d'Umma¹². La version de Mari se distingue nettement des autres notamment parce qu'elle ne fait pas appel aux « filles d'Anum » mais à Nikkal (^dnin-gal) et au dieu des troupeaux Sumuqan¹³. Ce n'est pourtant pas nécessairement une composition locale, car elle peut avoir été importée d'Ekallātum ou de sa région. Quoi qu'il en soit, un des intérêts de CUNES 48-06-263 est d'être le plus ancien représentant jusqu'à présent connu de ce type particulier de formule magique.

CUNES 48 - 06 - 263

- ša-¹mu¹-um a-šu-um
 2 mi-iq-tum na-ša-du
 i-ša-tum sa-ma-nu-um
 4 sí-kà-tum gi-ir-gi-šúm
 up-ta-ha-hi-ru-ni-im-ma
 6 iš-tu ša-me-im
 ur-¹du-ni-im¹
 8 ¹i-ku^{??1}-um na-ba-lu
 uh-ta-mi-iṭ
 10 im-me-ri-i
 šú-ha-ri-i
 (Tranche anépigraphie.)
 R. 12 ma-na-am lú^o-uš-pu-/ ur
 a-na ma-ra-at
 14 a-ni-im ša kà-ar-pa-tu/-ši-na
 sí-¹pa¹-ru-ú
 16 ¹ù¹ ¹kà-nu-ši-na¹ ¹za-gìn¹-nu me SIKIL/-¹im¹⁴
 li-ša-ba-ni-im
 18 me-e ti-me-tim
 el-lu-tim
 20 lu as-pu-u[h sí]-kà-tum / i-¹ta¹-ba-al
 ša-mu-um li-mu-ut i-na / iš-ri-šu

¹² Sur ce sujet, cf. mon édition à venir de la correspondance d'Imlik-Sîn conservée provisoirement à l'Université de Cornell.

¹³ Thème aussi présent dans YOS 11, 7 supposé venir aussi de Larsa.

¹⁴ ou el-/<lu-ti>-im.

22 *i-ša-tum li-ta-la-ak*
 a-na ša-di-ša <<DIŠ>>

¹(Les maladies) : Ša(m)mum, Ašûm, ²Miqtum (épilepsie), Našādu (sic !), ³Išātum (fièvre), Sāmānum, ⁴Sikkatum (variole), Girgiššum ⁵ se sont toutes regroupé(e)s ⁶ et du ciel ⁷ sont descendues. ⁸⁻⁹ *La terre cultivée est devenue une terre aride (?)*. (La maladie) s'est mise à consumer ¹⁰ les moutons, ¹¹ les tout petits. ¹² Qui dois-je envoyer avec un message ¹³ aux filles ¹⁴ d'Anum dont les jarres ¹⁵ sont en bronze ¹⁶ et les supports en lazulite ¹⁷ afin qu'elles viennent asperger l'eau pure ? ¹⁸⁻²⁰ Assurément j'ai répandu l'eau sainte des mers ! ²⁰ Sikkatum (variole) va être emportée. ²¹ Que (le mal) Ša(m)mum meure là d'où il vient ! ²² Qu'Išātum (fièvre) s'en aille ²³ dans sa montagne¹⁵ !

l. 4 : au lieu de *ge-er-gi-šu* (UIOM 1059 : 5) ou [*ge*₄]-*er-gi*₄-šu (HTS 2 : 4) ; *gi-ir-gi-iš-šu-um/-šum* (YOS 11, 8 : 4, 7), etc. Les graphies *šúm* et *lú* (l. 12) ne sont pas standards.

l. 5 : le verbe *puhhuru* est conjugué à la forme redoublée (R Stamm).

l. 8 : cette ligne fait difficulté. L'identification du deuxième signe n'est pas assurée. Le passage peut être comparé à UIOM 1059 : *iš-tu zi-qú-ra-at ša-me-e ur-du-ni, úh-ta-mi-iṭ i-me-ri ka-lu-mi* « depuis la ziggurat des cieux (les maladies) sont descendues et elle (sic !) / (le groupe) a donné la fièvre aux moutons (et) aux agneaux ». Notons que HTS 2 harmonise les deux verbes : [*iš*]-*tu šé-re-et* [*š*]*a-me-e, ur-du-ni uḥ-ta-mi-ṭù¹ i-mé-ri ka-lu-mi*. On peut se demander si le singulier du second verbe (*hamātum*) ne vient pas de ce que la formule entière est tirée directement d'une version dans laquelle seule une maladie était concernée, sur le modèle par exemple de YOS 11 7 à propos de la variole (*sikkatum*): *i-na ša-me-e x[...]*¹⁶, *in-na-pi-iḥ i-ša-a-tum, sí-ik-ka-tum im-ta-qú-ut, e-li ka-li bu-li-im, úh-ta-am-mi-iṭ la-a-le-e ka-lu-mi [...]* « Du ciel [...], la fièvre est devenue brûlante et la variole s'est abattue sur tout le troupeau. Elle a consommé nourrissons, agneaux etc. » L'hypothèse suivie ici est que l. 6 représente une incise. D'autres solutions peuvent néanmoins être envisagées :

¹⁵ C'est-à-dire : qu'elle meure !

¹⁶ Le signe visible ne peut pas être un e (pour *ellūtim*), il ressemble plutôt à un début de tim. Faut-il restaurer *i-na ša-me-e-t[im ...]* ?



l. 16 : le présent exemplaire ne s'accorde pas sur la matière des ustensiles utilisés par les déesses avec UIOM 1059 // à HTS 2 : les jarres y sont en lapis lazuli et les supports (mentionnés en tête) sont en or : « *ša ka-nu-ši-na kù-si₂₂ ka-<ar>-pa-tu-ši-na uq-nu-ú el-lu*. La version de CUNES 48-06-263 paraît cependant plus consistante et réaliste¹⁷. Toutefois, le sens de *kannum*, peut-être à comprendre dans ce contexte comme un récipient monté sur un support, est discuté, cf. A. Goetze, *JCS* 9, p. 16 n. 59 et plus récemment W. Sallaberger, *Der Babylonische Töpfer und seine Gefässe*, MHEM III, 1996, p. 112-113¹⁸. Le fait est que *kannum* peut être remplacé par *e-gub* (*egubbû*) un bassin d'eau purificatrice¹⁹. Pour K. Veenhof, l'association (artificielle) entre *kannum* et *karpatum*, lesquelles seraient synonymes, permettrait une allitération du genre vase et vasque²⁰. On remarquera la finale des noms des matières : *siparrû*, *uqnû* ce qui permet de supposer que *kù-si₂₂* est à transcrire *hurāšû*.

l. 18 : *mû tēmētim*, comme dans UIOM 1059 : 19 (*me-e ta-me-[tim] e-lu-ti*), ou HTS 2 : 17 (*me-e ti-ma¹-ti*)²¹. Ce détail souligne sans doute l'origine méridionale des incantations. Cf. CUSAS 32 28 : 2-3²² : *ina mē Apsīm ruqūtim, ina mē Ayyabba tēmētim rapšātīm* « Dans les

¹⁷ On doit comparer ce passage avec l'incantation paléo-assyrienne (kt a/k 611) qui énumère dans le même ordre les ustensiles. La jarre est en cornaline (*sāmtum*) et le *kannum* en cristal de roche (*hulālum*) ; cf. K. Veenhof, « An Old Assyrian Incantation against a Black Dog (kt a/k 611) », *WZKM* 86, p. 425-433. Ce document datant du début du 19^e siècle (entre 1895-1865 ; G. Barjamovic, « Contextualizing Tradition: Magic, Literacy and Domestic Life in Old Assyrian Kanesh », *SANER* 9, 2015, p. 49) est donc contemporain de CUNES 48-06-263.

¹⁸ Dans les archives de Mari, *kannum* désigne uniquement un support de vase ; cf. M. Guichard, *La Vaisselle de luxe des rois de Mari, Matériaux pour le Dictionnaire de Babylonien de Paris* 2, ARM XXXI, 2005, p. 203-210.

¹⁹ W. Farber, *JNES* 49, 1990, p. 306 n. 47 ; G. Cunningham, 'Deliver me from Evil'. *Mesopotamian Incantations 2500-1500 BC*, *Studia Pohl: Series Maior* 17, 1997, p. 122.

²⁰ K. Veenhof, « An Old Assyrian Incantation against a Black Dog (kt a/k 611) », *WZKM* 86, p. 425-430.

²¹ Dans une incantation fragmentaire d'Alalakh se trouve la même expression en sumérien *a-hi-a a-ab-b[a ...]* ; cf. W. Farber, *JNES* 1990, p. 309-310.

²² A. George, *Mesopotamian Incantations and Related Texts in the Schøyen Collection*, CUSAS 32, 2016, p. 141.

eaux profondes de l'Apsu, dans les eaux de l'océan, les vastes mers ».

l. 21 : cette formule n'est pas sans rappeler celle YOS 11, 4 : 17-18 : *šu-ḥa-rum li-ib-lu-uṭ-ma zu-qí-qí-pu-um li-mu-ut* « que l'enfant guérisse et le scorpion meure ! » Pour *išrum*, cf. aussi la conclusion de l'incantation paléo-assyrienne kt a/k 611 : *[a-n]a iš-ri-kà / [t]ù-ur* « retourne chez toi ! »²³.

La liste des maladies de cette nouvelle version présente des anomalies. Si elle comporte la plupart des maladies propres à ce genre, l'ordre est complètement différent de celui qui est attendu, la maladie *sikkatum* apparaissant par exemple en fin de liste contrairement à ce que l'on voit ailleurs. Or, dans la reprise des noms de maladies à la fin du texte, *sikkatum* revient bien en tête de liste, une liste plus courte (*pars pro toto* ?). La maladie *na-ša-du* est une erreur flagrante pour *ša-na-du* (*šanadu*). Le terme *ša-mu-um* qui ouvre le groupe fait également problème. Il apparaît à deux reprises ce qui ne laisse pas de doute sur le fait qu'il s'agit d'une maladie. Le souhait qu'elle « meure » dans « son lieu » (*ina išrišu*) montre qu'elle est traitée comme un démon. Soit c'est un *hapax legomenon*, soit le terme est encore une fois le produit d'une confusion du scribe qui a peut-être mélangé mécaniquement deux réalités distinctes *simmu* maladie (absente ici mais présente dans HTS 2 et UIOM 1059) et *šammu ašim* (nom d'une plante)²⁴. Toutefois la seconde mention de *ša-mu-um* permet de faire une autre hypothèse. Il peut s'agir de *šammu* « herbe » dont le sens négatif de « poison » est connu²⁵. Ce mal potentiel est évoqué dans YOS 11, 11 : c'est « une herbe de la montagne » qui s'attaque au cœur de Šamaš après qu'il l'a cueillie²⁶. Elle est aussi un des sujets de l'incantation c de CUSAS 32 26 : col. ii : cette fois elle provoque un mal de tête et une rage de dents.

²³ K. Veenhof, « An Old Assyrian Incantation against a Black Dog (kt a/k 611) », WZKM 86, p. 425-433.

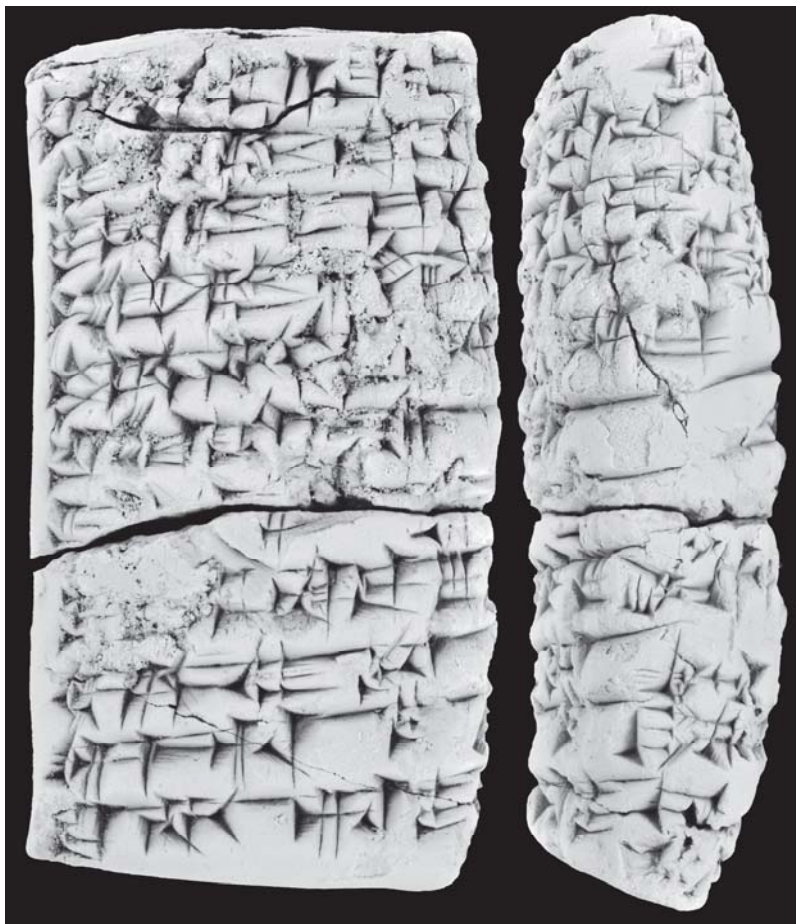
²⁴ La séquence attendue aurait peut-être dû être *simmu ašim*...

²⁵ Cf. CAD Š/1 šammu, p. 320.

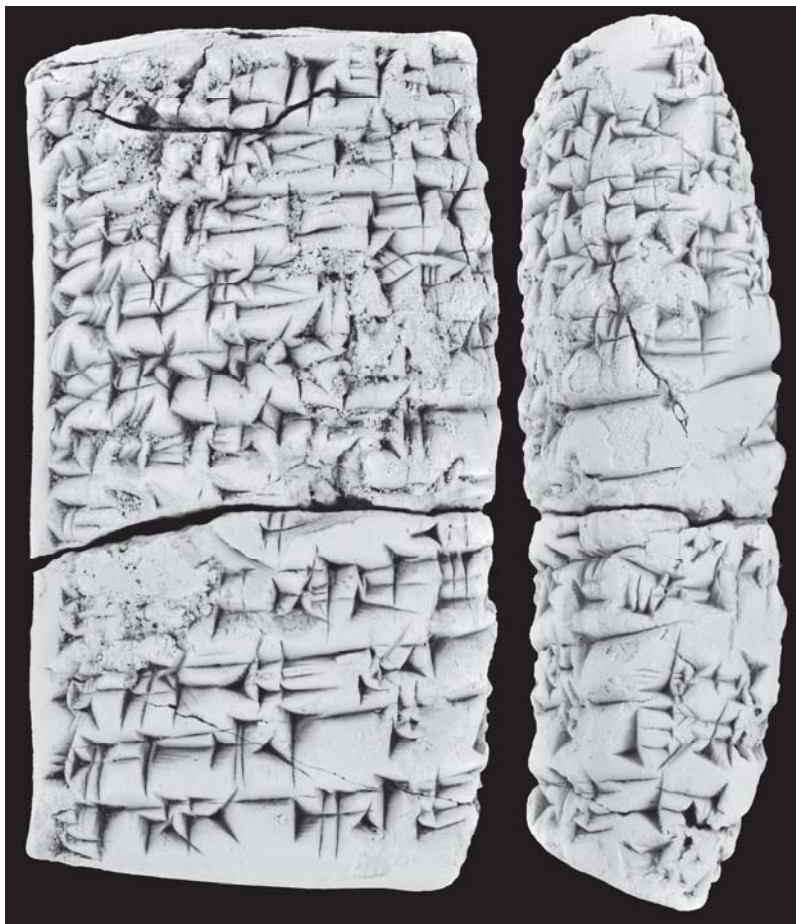
²⁶ Sur ce thème, cf. W. Farber, « Mannam Lušpur Ana Enkidu: some New Thoughts about an Old Motif », JNES 49, 1990, p. 303 et 308-309.

Placée en tête du cortège des maladies et maudite à la fin, entre Sikkatum et Išātum, Ša(m)mu est sans doute le mal sur lequel l'incantation (CUNES 48-06-263) entendait agir en particulier. C'est donc une œuvre de circonstance²⁷ élaborée de mémoire avec un peu d'inventivité.

²⁷ G. Cunningham ('*Deliver me from Evil*'. *Mesopotamian Incantations 2500-1500 BC*, *Studia Pohl: Series Maior* 17, 1997, p. 100) estime que les incantations paléo-babyloniennes étaient d'abord curatives. G. Barjamovic (à propos des incantations paléo-assyriennes) évoque leurs fonctions utilitaires et suppose que les formules étaient mises par écrit et conservées pour servir de talismans (« Contextualizing Tradition: Magic, Literacy and Domestic Life in Old Assyrian Kanesh », *SANER* 9, 2015, p. 51, 54-55 et 71-72).



CUNES 48-06-263 (face)



CUNES 48-06-263 (revers)

The Gezer Calendar as an Adaptation of the Mesopotamian Lexical Tradition (Ura 1)

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Abstract. *The Gezer Calendar is a school exercise adapted from cuneiform lexical tradition. A parallel for such adaptation of the cuneiform school tradition is known among the Amarna Scholarly Tablets, and a fragmentary cuneiform text from Ashkelon shows that this very lexical tradition was known in Canaan at the end of the Late Bronze Age.*

Résumé. *Le calendrier de Guézer est un exercice scolaire adapté d'une tradition lexicale cunéiforme. Une telle adaptation de tradition scolaire cunéiforme est attestée, de façon parallèle, à El-Amarna, cependant qu'un texte cunéiforme fragmentaire d'Ashqelôn montre que cette même tradition lexicale était connue en Canaan à la fin de l'âge du Bronze récent.*

The interpretation of the Gezer Calendar has been a scholarly crux. It seems to be a list of months according to agricultural activities. William F. Albright described the Gezer Calendar as a school exercise, and many scholars have followed Albright's assessment.¹ André Lemaire seems to have been the first scholar to understand the text as a school lexical list, pointing to the Egyptian lexical tradition and writing that it was "essentiellement une liste de noms de mois."² Yet, there still has been no concrete evidence to support its interpretation as a school exercise.³ Although the transcription and translation of the text have found a general consensus, there remains some debate concerning its purpose. This paper argues

¹ W. F. Albright, « The Gezer Calendar », *BASOR* 92, 1943, p. 21.

² A. Lemaire, *Les écoles et la formation de la bible dans l'ancien Israël*, Fribourg, Editions Universitaires, 1981, p. 11 (see note 23).

³ For a summary of scholarly opinions, see the recent article by Jacqueline Vayntrub, « "Observe Due Measure": The Gezer Inscription and Dividing a Trip Around the Sun », in *Epigraphy, Philology, and the Hebrew Bible: Methodological Perspectives on Philological and Comparative Study of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of Jo Ann Hackett*, Jeremy Hutton and Aaron Rubin (eds), Atlanta, SBL, 2015, p. 191–193.

that the Gezer Calendar is a direct adaptation of the Mesopotamian Lexical tradition known as *Ura*, which was known from chronological and geographical antecedents in the southern Levant.

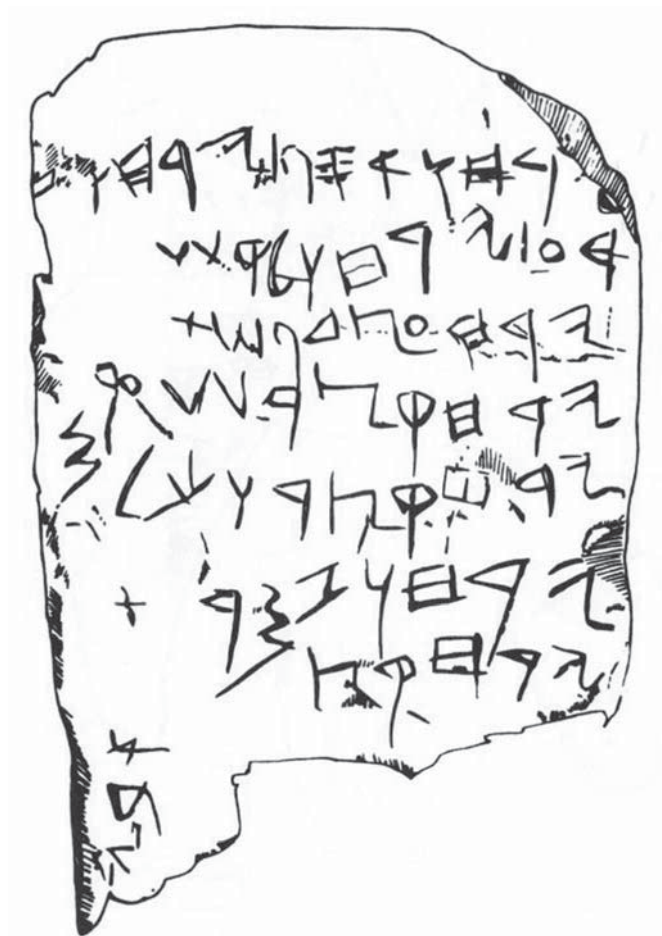


Figure 1. The Gezer Calendar (drawing from Johannes Renz, *Handbuch*)

The tablet (pictured in Figure 1) may be transcribed and translated as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| ירחו אספ־ירחו ז | 1. two? months of ingathering (olives)/months |
| רע־ירחו לקש | 2. of sowing (cereals)/months of late sowing |

ירח עצד פשת	3. a month of reaping weeds (for hay)
ירח קצר שערמ	4. a month of harvesting barley
ירח קצר וכל	5. a month of harvesting and measuring
ירחו זמר	6. months of grape harvesting
ירח קצ	7. a month of ingathering summer fruit
אבי	Edge Abi[]

The crude form of the letters already have suggested to scholars that the inscription should be understood as a school exercise. The scribe writes with the poor hand and execution indicative of a beginner. A more telling observation relates to the soft limestone material on which the text is written; there are the traces of erased letters on both sides of the tablet that suggest it was reused, perhaps by a student. That is, the tablet would be a palimpsest.⁴ For such reasons, many scholars have argued that the Gezer inscription functioned as a school exercise. But what kind of school exercise?

The traditional description of the tablet as a “calendar” is problematic. The relation between the agricultural cycle and the months of the year is, at best, loose. For example, Oded Borowski offers a general alignment of the Gezer Calendar with the cycle of the agricultural year in his book on *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel*, and it can be generally forced to work; at the same time, he admits that the agricultural cycles are much more complicated than this simple “manual,” as he calls it.⁵ In fact, it is not a manual or even a calendar. No farmer would find any use in it. It is a list with different “months” as they loosely relate to agricultural activities.

⁴ F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp et al. (eds), *Hebrew Inscriptions: Texts from the Biblical Period of the Monarchy with Concordance*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2005, p. 156; also Kyle McCarter who observes, “The limestone from which the small, hand-sized tablet is made is soft, and both surfaces show evidence of erasing and reuse. This suggests that it may have been a practice tablet and that its apparently formulaic inscription may have been a standard text used in scribal training” (« The Gezer Calendar », in *Context of Scripture*, volume 2, Leiden, Brill, 2003, p. 85).

⁵ Borowski, *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel*, Winona Lake, Eisenbrauns, 1987, p. 32–38.

The very description as a “calendar” depends largely on understanding the *waw* four times appended to *yrḥ* as a dual, thus translating “two months” and totaling twelve months. But this would seem to be twelve lunar months—not particularly useful as a perennial calendar. The *waw* has also been a crux for the interpretation because *waw* is not the usual Hebrew plural morpheme (we expect *-mem*), thus it usually explained as a proleptic suffix where the plural or dual would be unmarked.⁶ An alternative explanation has been to see the *waw* as the remnant of a case ending for plural nouns, which is known in the Zenjirli inscriptions (e.g., KAI 214:2, 215:17). Thus, the portrayal of the inscription as a calendar is hardly tight or entirely straightforward.

The scholarly problems with interpreting the Gezer Calendar can be solved by comparing it with aspects of the cuneiform lexical tradition. Helpful parallels can be found in the cuneiform lexical tradition in both form and language. One peripheral Akkadian example of the cuneiform lexical tradition may be found in the Amarna Scholarly Tablets, EA 368, an Egyptian-Akkadian bilingual lexical list.⁷ The reverse side of this text condenses and adapts a section of Ura 1 dealing with “Trees and Wood Items.” Each line begins with an Egyptian word in the first column written in syllabic cuneiform, followed by its Akkadian translation in a parallel column.

⁶ See the review of the literature in Dobbs-Allsop et al., *Hebrew Inscriptions*, p. 157–158. Another suggestion has been to see the so-called *waw* as the Egyptian hieratic number “2”; see J. Segal, « “Yrḥ” in the Gezer “Calendar” », *JSS* 7, 1962, p. 212–221. However, this is not supported by a close inspection of the hieratic tradition, see Stefan Wimmer, *Palästinisches Hieratisch: Die Zahl- und Sonderzeichen in der althebräischen Schrift*, Ägypten und Alten Testament 75, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2008, p. 199–200. An alternative (and new) explanation concerning the *waw* appended to *yrḥ*, usually read as a plural/dual suffix, can be offered on the basis of the comparative lexical lists. It has been noted that the plural determinative MEŠ frequently –and arbitrarily– appears in the cuneiform lexical lists in neo-Assyrian period.

⁷ See Shlomo Izreel, *The Amarna Scholarly Tablets*, Cuneiform Monographs 9, Groningen, Styx Publications, 1997, p. 77–81; Veldhuis, *History of the Cuneiform Lexical Tradition*, Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record 6, Münster, Ugarit-Verlag, 2014, p. 302–304. The original publication was by Sydney Smith, C.J. Gadd and T. Eric Peet, « A Cuneiform Vocabulary of Egyptian Words », *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 11, 1925, p. 230–240.

The Akkadian column illustrates a visual aesthetic created by the repetition of the Sumerian determinative GIŠ:

EA 368 Reverse			
	Egyptian	Akkadian	Translation
1'-4'.	broken		
5.	ᵀpiᵀl-pa-ru	[GIŠ]ᵀÉᵀ[]	"house"
6.	pu-us-bi-ú	GIŠ.l[G]	"door"
7.	DU-ḥu-lu	GIŠ.SI[.GAR]	"bolt"
8.	na-ab-na-su	GIŠ.N[A]	"door post/socket"
9.	DU-as-bu	GIŠ.G[U.ZA]	"chair"
10.	pa-ḥa-tu ₄	GIŠ.NA[]	"bed"
11.	ḥa-DU-pu	GIŠ.BANŠUR	"(offering) table"

The standard Ura 1 thematic list is a robust and esoteric list of "Trees and Wood Items."⁸ This Amarna adaptation chooses a set of essential items from the standard thematic list. Although this list is not an exact copy of the formal and rigid Mesopotamian lexical lists, it clearly depends on that tradition. Moreover, this local adaptation illustrates how Mesopotamian school traditions could be altered for different types of educational settings and across different writing systems.

The Gezer Calendar also has the thematic and visual aesthetic of typical of many lexical lists. The first thing to note is the formal style of the text, with each syntactic unit beginning by repeating the word *yrḥ* "moon; month." In fact, apart from the second line, every physical line begins with the same word, which is feature common to lexical texts.⁹ Cuneiform lexical series is organized thematically (especially beginning with Ura 1) so that texts begin with a determinative (e.g., GIŠ), which often gives them their visual aesthetic that is paralleled here in the use of *yrḥ*. The Gezer Calendar begins with *yrḥ* on lines 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. The exception in line 2 is likely the result of a student error, corrected in the following

⁸ Benno Landsberger, *The Series ḪAR-ra = ḫubullu. Tablets I-IV, Materialien zum Sumerian Lexikon 5*; Rome, Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1957. Also see Niek Veldhuis, *Elementary Education at Nippur: The Lists of Trees and Wooden Objects*, Groningen, 1997.

⁹ See Veldhuis, *History of Cuneiform Lexical Tradition*, p. 412-413.

lines. In line 1, the student had available space and mistakenly wrote *yrḥ* in a continuation of the line. This practice, however, was not continued in later lines—even where there was space to continue. For example, there was ample space in lines 2, 3, and 6 for a scribe to continue and write *yrḥ*, but the scribe did not. On the other hand, in line 4 there was not enough room to complete the final word on the line (שערַח); rather than simply continue on the next line, the scribe completes the line by writing the final letter *mem* just below the line after the *resh*. This allows the next line to begin with *yrḥ*. Thus, the spacing of the exercise seems to prefer the use of *yrḥ* as a kind of determinative defining each line of text.

The themes of agriculture and calendar have their own elaborate sections in Ura 1,¹⁰ and the Gezer Calendar would be an adaptation and an abridgement (like EA 368). Although the Gezer tablet is not a simple translation into early alphabetic curriculum, there are notable points of contact. To begin with, Ura 1 has a series of lexemes related to reaping and harvesting headed with the verb *eṣedu* “to reap” (ll. 148–156):¹¹

še-kin-kud	<i>e-še-du</i>	“reaping (of the barley)”
še-kin-kud-še	<i>a-na e-še-di</i>	“until the reaping (of the barley)”
u ₄ -še-kin-kud	<i>UD-me e-še-di</i>	“the time of the reaping (of the barley)”
egir-še-kin-kud	<i>ar-kāt e-še-di</i>	“the time after reaping (the barley)”
EBUR	<i>e-bu-ru</i>	“harvest”
EBUR-še	<i>a-na e-bu-ri</i>	“until harvest”
u ₄ -EBUR-še	<i>a-na UD-me e-bu-ri</i>	“until the harvest season”
egir-EBUR-še	<i>a-na ar-kāt e-bu-ri</i>	“until the season after the harvest”
mu-un-du-EBUR-še	<i>a-na šu-ru-ub-ti e-bu-ri</i>	“until the bringing in of the harvest”

¹⁰ For the standard version of Ura 1, see Landsberger, *Materialien zum Sumerischen Lexicon* V, p. 24–25.

¹¹ Landsberger, *Materialien zum sumerischen Lexicon* V, p. 19.

While these are certainly not a close parallel to the Gezer inscription, the flavor of the lexical list and repetitions begin to be evident already in this short selection. Some of the terminology is even cognate with the Gezer inscription such as the use of *eṣedu* “reaping,” which parallels *ʿšd* (עצד) in line 3 of the Calendar.¹² It is also worth pointing out that the verbal constructions in this section of Ura use the infinitive construct,¹³ just as we have in the Gezer Calendar. This section of Ura continues in a similar fashion with various agricultural themes and terminology (1, 157-175).

The next section of canonical Ura lexical list (1, 176-234) is then a list of words and expressions related to time—the other theme of the Gezer Calendar. It begins with a section related to the “day” (UD-*mu*), moves to the canonical section on *arḫu* “months,” and concludes with the year (*šanat*). Lines 211-216 relate to the “month”:

itu	<i>ar-ḫu</i>	“month”
itu-šè	<i>a-na ar-ḫi</i>	“within a month”
ud-itu-šè	<i>a-na UD ar-ḫi</i>	“within the period of a month”
sag-itu-šè	<i>a-na ri-eš ar-ḫi</i>	“until the beginning of the month”
egir-itu-šè	<i>a-na ar-kàt ar-ḫi</i>	“until the end of the month”
u ₄ kaš ₄ -a	UD- <i>mu li-is-mu</i>	“day of the running” (announcing month)
u ₄ -sar	<i>ar-ḫu</i>	“new moon”

The excavation of fragmentary lexical text at Ashkelon dating to about 1200 BCE shows that local Canaanite scribes were actually familiar with this section of Ura. As John Huehnergard and Wilfred van Soldt reconstruct it, there were three columns to the Ashkelon lexical list: Sumerian (ITU), Akkadian (*arḫu*), and West Semitic (*ia-ar-ḫu* = *yeraḫ*).¹⁴ Their reconstruction was aided by a much more

¹² Aaron Koller offers an ingenious philological explanation of *ʿšd* in the Gezer Calendar, but it is much simpler to understand it as an adaptation of the cuneiform lexical tradition; see Koller, *The Ancient Semantic Field of Cutting Tools in Biblical Hebrew: A Philological, Archaeological, and Semantic Study*, CBQMS 49, Washington, Catholic Biblical Association, 2012, p. 75–128.

¹³ First, infinitives of the verb *eṣedu* “to reap” cited above, and later infinitives *šurubum* “to bring in (the harvest)” in ll. 160–163.

¹⁴ John Huehnergard and Wilfred van Soldt, « A Cuneiform Lexical Text from Ashkelon with a Canaanite Column », *IEJ* 49, 1999, p. 191.

complete copy that was excavated at Emar. It is especially important to emphasize that this fragment varies from the canonical version of Ura only by adding a West Semitic column. This was not part of the normal Mesopotamian lexical tradition, but it is a tradition known from peripheral sites like Emar, Ugarit, and now Ashkelon. In this respect, these peripheral Akkadian examples already show the willingness to adapt scribal curriculum in the West Semitic tradition. In fact, the influence from the traditional term *arḫu* “month”—or, *yarḫu* in West Semitic column—in the cuneiform lexical series may help explain the preference for term *yrḫ* (as opposed to *ḫdš*) in the Gezer inscription. This fragment also provides tangible evidence of a “vector of transmission” of the cuneiform lexical tradition for early Canaanite and Hebrew scribes.¹⁵

In sum, the Gezer Calendar seems to be a lexical list specifically adapted and abridged from the traditional cuneiform lexical tradition. Moreover, the Amarna Scholarly Tablet EA 368 provides evidence for such adaptation. Finally, a lexical tablet from Ashkelon dating to about 1200 BCE provides tangible evidence that this cuneiform lexical was known and taught among local scribes at the end of the Late Bronze Age. The Gezer Calendar suggests that such school traditions were locally adapted by early alphabetic scribes during the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age transition as linear alphabetic replaced the cuneiform writing system.

¹⁵ The concept of a “vector of transmission” is borrowed from William Morrow, « Resistance and Hybridity in Late Bronze Age Canaan », RB 115, 2008, p. 322.

The Kings, the City and the House of David on the Mesha Stele in Light of New Imaging Techniques

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Abstract. Thanks to new imaging techniques applied to the Mesha stele and its squeezes, the decipherment of this major inscription is significantly improved. In this essay, I present three case studies, in lines 4, 12 and 31 respectively. In line 4, the reading “kings” is to be preferred; in line 12, the reading “city” is confirmed; in line 31, the mention of the “house of David” remains hypothetical but is the most probable reading. With the Tel Dan inscription, the Mesha stele might be the earliest historical witness of a ruler named David who, in the ninth century BCE, was remembered as the founder of a Judahite dynasty.

Résumé. Grâce aux nouvelles techniques d'imagerie numérique appliquées à la stèle de Mésha et à ses estampages, le déchiffrement de cette inscription majeure est considérablement amélioré. Dans cet essai, je présente trois études de cas aux lignes 4, 12 et 31 respectivement. À la ligne 4, la lecture « rois » doit être retenue ; à la ligne 12, la lecture « ville » est confirmée ; à la ligne 31, la mention de la « maison de David » demeure hypothétique mais reste la lecture la plus probable. Avec l'inscription de Tel Dan, la stèle de Mésha pourrait ainsi constituer le plus ancien témoin historique d'un certain souverain nommé David qui, au IX^e siècle avant Jésus-Christ, était perçu comme le fondateur d'une dynastie judaïte.

Keywords. Mesha, Moab, RTI, Bible – 2 Kings, David

Introduction¹

In 1868, Frederick Augustus Klein, an Alsatian missionary, heard about a stele in Dhiban, east of the Jordan river—a toponym whose

¹ This essay is based on the first part of a paper presented on 29 November 2018 at an international conference at the French Research Center in Jerusalem celebrating the 150th anniversary of the discovery of the Mesha stele.

modern name is reminiscent of Dibon, a Moabite city in the Hebrew Bible.² The stone soon draws a lot of attention and several Westerners try to secure it. Charles Clermont-Ganneau is able to obtain a squeeze as early as 1869 and offers a preliminary publication in 1870.³ The story of the Moabite stone is fascinating and features numerous twists and plot-turns, scholarly competition, political races, and even suspicions of forgery.⁴ More than 150 years after its discovery, it still prompts discussions on such issues as palaeography, grammar, vocabulary, discourse and, of course, biblical and historical insights.

In this paper, I would like to focus on the Mesha stele's decipherment, which is quite challenging due to its poor condition and fragmentary state. It is possible, nonetheless, to improve its reading using new imaging techniques, especially Polynomial Texture Mapping (PTM). This digital imaging technique was developed in the early twenty-first century to capture the reflectance characteristics of a surface.⁵ Such an approach, known as Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI), is the digital heir of a technique that is well known to epigraphists: by changing the angle of lighting, details of a relief become more or less visible. Raking light, especially, proves effective when studying incised inscriptions, but its orientation must be changed depending on the angle of a given stroke. This can easily be achieved if (1) the artefact is at hand and (2) adequate lighting equipment is readily available. But such ideal conditions are not always possible; and when they are, it is worth taking a series of pictures to document the effect produced by various lighting angles.

² Num 21:30; 32:3, 34; 33:45–46; Josh 13:9, 17; Isa 15:2; Jer 48:18, 22; Neh 11:25.

³ Charles Clermont-Ganneau, *La stèle de Dhiban, ou stèle de Mesa, roi de Moab*, 896 avant J. C. : lettres à M. le C^{te} de Vogüé (Paris: Librairie polytechnique / Librairie académique, 1870).

⁴ The issue was still debated more than seventy years after the discovery, see e.g. Avraham Shalom Yahuda, "The Story of a Forgery and the Mēša Inscription," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 35.2 (1944): 139–64.

⁵ Tom Malzbender, Dan Gelb, and Hans Wolters, "Polynomial Texture Maps," in *Proceedings of the 28th Annual Conference on Computer Graphics and Interactive Techniques – SIGGRAPH '01* (New York: ACM Press, 2001), 519–28.

That is where computer science comes into play. By combining such a series of pictures, it is possible to produce a virtual model of the artefact. The resulting PTM file can be read by RTI software⁶ that generates an image based on a given lighting angle. As a matter of fact, it is even possible to simulate multiple lighting angles or virtually increase the reflectance of the artefact's surface. All of these operations could be computed on the basis of a high-resolution 3D scan of the artefact, but the equipment required to produce such a scan has, until recently, been quite expensive and cumbersome. I am quite confident that the latest generations of smartphones' 3D capabilities will lead to the development of new imaging techniques for the study of ancient artefacts. But, in the meantime, let us see how RTI can help in deciphering the Mesha stele.

In the summer of 2015, Marilyn Lundberg, Bruce Zuckerman, Heather Parker, André Lemaire and I conducted RTI on the Mesha stele and its squeezes in Paris, at the Louvre and the Academy of Inscriptions and Fine Letters. Marilyn Lundberg and Bruce Zuckerman were among the first scholars to use RTI for Semitic epigraphy and it was a pleasure to collaborate with them on this project. As the reader will see below, the resulting images confirm this technique's usefulness to decipher the Moabite stone. When it comes to squeezes, another technique may sometimes prove more efficient: instead of changing the lighting angle above or around the artefact, a light source may be placed behind the squeeze so as to reveal its varying thickness. Deeper incisions on the stone will produce a thicker squeeze and thus absorb more light. Epigraphists and papyrologists are familiar with such backlighting technique, and the advent of digital photography has made it possible to produce a high-resolution backlit image of the squeeze in the Louvre. In 2018, Isabel Bonora of the Louvre worked with photographer Philippe Fuzeau to produce such a picture. How does it compare to RTI? Can these new digital images really improve the reading of the

⁶ Such as RTIViewer, a free and open-source multi-platform software, available at <http://culturalheritageimaging.org>. For Semitic epigraphy, see also the InscriptiFact Digital Image Library at <http://inscriptifact.com>, which embeds an RTI viewer.

Mesha inscription? Let us test these new imaging techniques on three highly debated readings.

Aggressors or Kings in Line 4?

Line 4 is rather well preserved; here is Clermont-Ganneau's initial reading:⁷

4. שׁע.בי.השעני.מכל.השלכן.וכי.הראני.בכל.שנאי|ע[מר]

His reading may be translated thus:

4. (sal-)vation, for he saved me from all the aggressors and made me see all my haters. *O[mr-](i)*

The fifth word, השלכן, is “difficult to decipher” according to Clermont-Ganneau.⁸ He understands it as a substantive from the root שלך “to throw” and translates it as “aggressors” (p. 7) or “peril, attack, stroke” (p. 29). His reading is followed by several scholars,

⁷ Clermont-Ganneau, *La stèle de Dhiban*, 5.

⁸ Clermont-Ganneau, *La stèle de Dhiban*, 28.

including Nöldeke,⁹ Dussaud,¹⁰ Segert,¹¹ Donner and Röllig,¹² Gibson,¹³ Dahood,¹⁴ Jackson and Dearman,¹⁵ or, recently, Gaß.¹⁶ The word is usually translated “assailants” or “assaults,” though Segert and Dahood suggest the meaning “cormorants.” Other scholars, however, recognized that this reading was problematic and tried to find a solution. As early as 1870, Nöldeke considered reading המלכן “the kings” instead, but rejected this solution in favor of the *lectio difficilior* השלכן.¹⁷ Hitzig did not seem to share the same concerns and, the same year, adopted המלכן, which he considered to be an “improvement.”¹⁸ He was quickly followed by a number of scholars, such as Smend and Socin¹⁹ or Lidzbarski.²⁰ This alternative reading

⁹ Theodor Nöldeke, *Die Inschrift des Königs Mesa von Moab (9. Jahrhundert vor Christus)* (Kiel: Schwers’sche Buchhandlung, 1870), 4.

¹⁰ René Dussaud, *Les monuments palestiniens et judaïques (Moab, Judée, Philistie, Samarie, Galilée)*, Musée du Louvre, département des antiquités orientales (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1912), 5.

¹¹ Stanislav Segert, “Die Sprache Der Moabitischen Königsinschrift,” *Archiv Orientalní* 29 (1961): 244.

¹² Herbert Donner and Wolfgang Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften, Band I, Texte* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1962), 33.

¹³ John C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions, Volume 1, Hebrew and Moabite Inscriptions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 74.

¹⁴ Mitchell Dahood, “The Moabite Stone and Northwest Semitic Philology,” in *The Archaeology of Jordan and Other Studies Presented to Siegfried H. Horn*, ed. Lawrence T. Geraty and Larry G. Herr (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1986), 430.

¹⁵ Kent P. Jackson and J. Andrew Dearman, “The Text of the Mesha^c Inscription,” in *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab*, ed. J. Andrew Dearman, *Archaeology and Biblical Studies* 02 (Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1989), 94.

¹⁶ Erasmus Gaß, *Die Moabiter — Geschichte und Kultur eines ostjordanischen Volkes im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, *Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 38 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 8.

¹⁷ Nöldeke, *Die Inschrift des Königs Mesa von Moab*, 9.

¹⁸ Ferdinand Hitzig, *Die Inschrift des Mesha, Königes von Moab* (Mohr: Heidelberg, 1870), 13, 20.

¹⁹ Rudolf Smend and Albert Socin, *Die Inschrift des Königs Mesa von Moab* (Freiburg: Mohr, 1886), 12.

²⁰ Mark Lidzbarski, *Handbuch der nordsemitischen Epigraphik, I. Text* (Weimar: Emil Felber, 1898), 415.

is still maintained today by Lemaire²¹ and Aḥituv.²² More specifically, Lemaire recently argued that the size and orientation of the letter corresponds to the head of a *𐤍* rather than a *𐤖*, and that the scribe simply forgot to inscribe the descender.²³

I used RTI to decipher this letter and identify various strokes. Using the right settings, I was able to shed light on a long stroke located between the *𐤍* that precedes and what is usually read as *𐤖* (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. RTI photograph of the Mesha inscription in the Louvre Museum (AO 5066), middle of line 4. (© West Semitic Research / Michael Langlois)

Using specular enhancement, the stroke becomes even easier to read (see Figure 2).

²¹ André Lemaire, “La stèle de Mésha et l’histoire de l’ancien Israël,” in *Storia e tradizioni di Israele: scritti in onore di J. Alberto Soggin*, ed. Daniele Garrone and Felice Israel (Brescia: Paideia, 1991), 143–69.

²² Shmuel Aḥituv, *Echoes from the Past. Hebrew and Cognate Inscriptions from the Biblical Period* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2008), 392.

²³ André Lemaire, “La stèle de Mésha : Enjeux épigraphiques et historiques” (presented at the conference *La stèle de Mésha 150 ans après la découverte*, Centre de recherche français à Jérusalem, 29 November 2018).



Figure 2. RTI photograph of the Mesha inscription, middle of line 4, after specular enhancement. (© West Semitic Research / Michael Langlois)

The stroke barely joins the so-called ψ , and it is tempting to read it as a λ or γ , or perhaps even as a small (additional) η . But the script is otherwise spacious, and the letter would somehow have to be crammed in between. If we suppose, instead, that this stroke does not preserve yet another letter but is to be connected to the previous or the next, it can either be the left stroke of a preceding π or the descender of a following μ . π is unlikely, as (1) the two vertical strokes would not be parallel and (2) there seems to be traces of three horizontal strokes, whereas other occurrences of π on the stele only have two. There remains the option of reading μ , but this is not without problems: the descender seems quite far from the head, going backward, and quite short. A look at the previous μ , however, may partially account for this phenomenon. There, too, the descender seems almost detached from the head; but a closer look reveals a backward (perhaps rounded) shoulder turning into a concave descender. Though the two shapes are quite different, this ductus could explain why our enigmatic stroke seems detached from the head and slanted backwards. The resulting form is an abnormal μ , but this solution, as seen on a digitally-generated drawing (see Figure 3), seems less problematic than reading two small letters.



Figure 3. Digital drawing of the proposed reading, middle of line 4 of the Mesha inscription. (© West Semitic Research / Michael Langlois)

Nöldeke's hesitation to read מ is not completely dissipated, but arguments based on the absence of a descender are now obsolete and the new evidence points towards המלכן "the kings" as the best reading.

What is "for Kemosh" in Line 12?

The decipherment of line 12 has raised major discussions. Here is Clermont-Ganneau's original reading of this line:

12. הקר.רית.לכמש.ולמאב|ואשב.משם.את וא[ס]

His reading may be translated thus:

12. the city *a spectacle/satiation* for Kemosh and for Moab. And I took from there the ... and I

Clermont-Ganneau could not decipher the end of the line, but was otherwise quite confident about his reading. The second word, רית, was understood as a defective form or ראית which, thanks to a parallel in Qoh 5:10, may be translated as "spectacle."²⁴ This reading was followed by most scholars, including Nöldeke,²⁵ Hitzig,²⁶

²⁴ Clermont-Ganneau, *La stèle de Dhiban*, 33.

²⁵ Nöldeke, *Die Inschrift des Königs Mesa von Moab*, 4.

²⁶ Hitzig, *Die Inschrift des Mesha*, 13.

Smend and Socin,²⁷ etc. Without questioning the decipherment itself, Halévy suggested that the form might be due to a weakening of ע and read רעית “grazing, satisfying, satisfaction” as a ritual term.²⁸ Albright likewise offered another origin for the word, deriving it from $\sqrt{\text{RWY}}$ and translating it “satiation.”²⁹ Ryckmans too offered a new explanation: on the basis of several parallels in Minaean inscriptions, the term should, according to him, be translated “offering.”³⁰ He was notably followed by Donner and Röllig,³¹ Segert,³² and Beeston.³³ The latter further discusses the seemingly problematic use of this term in reference to Moab, which is not a deity: such a conquest is for the benefit of the national deity and the people, an expression found in a Sabaic inscription.

A few years later, however, Lemaire found another solution: instead of רית , the word may be read הית , from the well-known verb “to be.”³⁴ He thus translates the phrase: “the city belonged to Kemosh and to Moab.” He has since been followed by several scholars, including Aḥituv³⁵ and Gaß.³⁶ But this reading was recently rejected by Schade who, in 2005, examined the stele and its squeeze in the Louvre Museum.³⁷ He concluded that “r is easily readable” on the squeeze and that “ryt is the proper reading of the word.”

²⁷ Smend and Socin, *Die Inschrift des Königs Mesa von Moab*, 12.

²⁸ Joseph Halévy, “L’inscription de Mêša’, roi de Moab. Remarques philologiques et historiques (Suite),” *Revue sémitique d’épigraphie et d’histoire ancienne* 8.4 (1900): 289.

²⁹ William F. Albright, “Two Little Understood Amarna Letters from the Middle Jordan Valley,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 89 (1943): 16 n. 55.

³⁰ Gonzague Ryckmans, “He Oude Arabië en de Bijbel,” *Jaarbericht van het voor-aziatisch-egyptisch genootschap Ex Oriente Lux* 14 (1955–1956): 81.

³¹ Donner and Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften, Band I, Texte*, 169, 175.

³² Segert, “Die Sprache Der Moabitischen Königsinschrift,” 244.

³³ A. F. L. Beeston, “Mesha and Ataroth,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 2 (1985): 143–44.

³⁴ André Lemaire, “Notes d’épigraphie nord-ouest sémitique,” *Syria* 64.3/4 (1987): 206–7.

³⁵ Aḥituv, *Echoes from the Past*, 392, 405.

³⁶ Gaß, *Die Moabiter*, 8, 25–26.

³⁷ Aaron Schade, “New Photographs Supporting the Reading Ryt in Line 12 of the Mesha Inscription,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 55 (2005): 205–8.

Lemaire immediately responded that Schade probably read the wrong strokes: he confused traces below the line with letter strokes, which are actually higher, aligned with other letters.³⁸ Lemaire examined the stone and the squeeze and concluded that “the reading *r* is not convincing” and that “a *h* is legible.” Lemaire was followed by An, who concluded that reading רית is “untenable.”³⁹ Yet, Zevit remained unconvinced and recently attempted to explain רית as a religious phenomenon associated with bloodletting.⁴⁰

Let us have a new look at this problem using RTI. With optimized settings and additional image enhancement, the text appears quite clearly (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. RTI photograph of the Mesha inscription, beginning of line 12.
(© West Semitic Research / Michael Langlois)

On the right-hand side, after ק and ר, the bottom of a straight descender can be seen below the crack, but the top is missing. The

³⁸ André Lemaire, “New Photographs and Ryt or Hyt in the Mesha Inscription, Line 12,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 57 (2007): 204–7.

³⁹ Hannah S. An, “Some Additional Epigraphic Comments on the Mesha Stele: The Case for Reading Hyt in Line 12,” *Maarav* 17.2 (2010): 172.

⁴⁰ Ziony Zevit, “Mesha’s RYT in the Context of Moabite and Israelite Bloodletting,” in *Puzzling out the Past: Studies in Northwest Semitic Languages and Literatures in Honor of Bruce Zuckerman*, ed. Marilyn J. Lundberg, Steven Fine, and Wayne T. Pitard, *Culture and History of the Ancient Near East* 55 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 235–38.

upper diagonal stroke has been restored when the stone was reconstructed, and should not be taken into account. After the crack, י and ת are well preserved. As for the head of our enigmatic letter, it is partly lost and partly damaged. Fortunately, a squeeze was made before the stone was blown up. Let us have a look at the new digital photograph that was made using backlighting (see Figure 5).



Figure 5. Digital photograph of the squeeze of the Mesha stele in the Louvre Museum (AO 5019) with backlighting and further digital enhancement, beginning of line 12. (© Musée du Louvre / Philippe Fuzeau / Michael Langlois)

On the right-hand side, ק and ר are quite readable, but the following letters are less visible than they are on the stone itself using RTI. The upper diagonal stroke of our mystery letter seems visible—hence its restoration on the stone—but other traces are compatible with both ר and ה, without a clear winner. So, let us now attempt RTI on the squeeze itself. I optimized lighting settings and added further digital enhancement in order to reveal diagonal strokes (see Figure 6).



Figure 6. RTI photograph of the squeeze of the Mesha stele in the Louvre Museum, beginning of line 12, after specular enhancement. (© West Semitic Research / Michael Langlois)

The upper diagonal stroke is well preserved, and joins the shaft at its top. But the real interest of this image is that it reveals two additional parallel strokes, thus confirming that the letter is indeed ה and not ר. I can now confidently offer a digital drawing of the proposed reading (see Figure 7).



Figure 7. Digital drawing of the proposed reading, beginning of line 12 of the Mesha inscription. (© West Semitic Research / Michael Langlois)

With this new evidence, the beginning of line 12 must be read **לכמש**, **הקרהית**, “the city was <given> to Kemosh,” thereby confirming that the Moabite noun **קר** “city” is feminine despite its plural **קרן** (cf. line 29), as is the case with its Hebrew counterpart **עיר** (plural **ערים**).

Is David Mentioned in Line 31?

As a last example, let us look at what is, perhaps, the most famous and controversial reading on the Mesha stele: the possible mention of the “house of David” in line 31. Here is Clermont-Ganneau’s original reading of this line:⁴¹

.31 הארץ וחרונן. ישב. בה. ב. ו

His reading may be translated thus:

31. ... the land. And Horonaim, he dwelt in it *with*...

The end of the line is difficult to decipher; after **בה**, Smend and Socin read **אמר** **בן. דדן. ודדן**, which can be translated “the son of Dedan and Dedan said.”⁴² Nordlander read **בני. חור[י]. אשר** “the sons of Hor[i,]which,” with a mention of Horites found in Gen 14:6 and other passages of the Hebrew Bible.⁴³ Lidzbarski initially proposed to read **בני. ודדן. אמר**⁴⁴ but later preferred to interpret the traces of the second letter as **ת** instead of **ג**, with enough room for another letter before **ו**. After **ו**, he likewise changed his initial reading, from **ד** to **ק**.⁴⁵ Halévy too read **ק** rather than **ד** because he saw what he

⁴¹ Clermont-Ganneau, *La stèle de Dhiban*, 6.

⁴² Smend and Socin, *Die Inschrift des Königs Mesa von Moab*, 12, 15.

⁴³ K. G. Amandus Nordlander, *Die Inschrift des Königs Mesa von Moab* (Leipzig: W. Drugulin, 1896), 54, 60, 62.

⁴⁴ Lidzbarski, *Handbuch der nordsemitischen Epigraphik*, I. Text, 416.

⁴⁵ Mark Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik. Erster Band: 1900-1902* (Giessen: J. Ricker’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1902), 9; Mark Lidzbarski, *Altsemitische Texte. Erstes Heft: Kanaanäische Inschriften (Moabitisch, Althebräisch, Phönizisch, Punisch)* (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1907), 9.

considered to be a characteristic descender;⁴⁶ as for the second letter, he agreed that ת is better than נ but preferred ש, which was also considered by Lidzbarski and allows for a reconstruction [בשם.ו.קדר] “Basam and Qedar” (cp. Gen 25:13). Most scholars followed one of those options: Dussaud read אש.וד.אש,⁴⁷ Donner and Röllig read אש[. . .]ב.ת.ו.ק,⁴⁸ Gibson read ב.ת.ו.ק.אש,⁴⁹ as did Jackson and Dearman.⁵⁰

In 1992, Lemaire submitted for publication an edition of the Mesha stele in which he read ב.ת.ו.ק[ד.ו] “the house/dynasty of [Da]vid” at the end of l. 31.⁵¹ He explained that these letters had already been read by previous scholars, and that the syntagm matched biblical parallels. This hypothesis found additional support in 1993 when an almost exact syntagm (ביתדוד) appeared on a newly discovered inscription from Tel Dan.⁵² Independently, Na’aman⁵³ proposed in 1994 to read ב.ת.ו.ק[ד.ו] “the House of DWDH,” whereas Puech⁵⁴ offered the same reconstruction as Lemaire. This reading was soon adopted by other scholars, such as Rainey,⁵⁵ Routledge,⁵⁶

⁴⁶ Halévy, “L’inscription de Mēša, roi de Moab (suite et fin),” 295.

⁴⁷ Dussaud, *Les monuments palestiniens et judaïques*, 5.

⁴⁸ Donner and Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*, Band I, Texte, 33.

⁴⁹ Gibson, *TSSI* 1, 75.

⁵⁰ Jackson and Dearman, “The Text of the Mesha’ Inscription,” 95.

⁵¹ André Lemaire, “La dynastie davidique (BYT DWD) dans deux inscriptions ouest-sémitiques du IX^e s. av. J.-C.,” *SEL* 11 (1994): 18. See also André Lemaire, “‘House of David’ Restored in Moabite Inscription,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 20.3 (1994): 30–37.

⁵² Avraham Biran and Joseph Naveh, “An Aramaic Inscription of the First Temple Period from Tel Dan / בית ראשון מתל דן,” *Qadmoniot* 26.3–4 (1993): 77; Avraham Biran and Joseph Naveh, “An Aramaic Stele Fragment from Tel Dan,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 43.2–3 (1993): 87, 90, 93.

⁵³ Nadav Na’aman, “The Campaign of Mesha against Horonaim,” *Biblische Notizen* 73 (1994): 27–30.

⁵⁴ Émile Puech, “La stèle araméenne de Dan : Bar Hadad II et la coalition des Omrides et de la maison de David,” *Revue Biblique* 101.2 (1994): 227 n. 31.

⁵⁵ Anson F. Rainey, “The ‘House of David’ and the House of the Deconstructionists,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 20.6 (1994): 47.

⁵⁶ Bruce Routledge, “The Politics of Mesha: Segmented Identities and State Formation in Iron Age Moab,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 43.3 (2000): 249.

Donner and Röllig,⁵⁷ Aḥituv,⁵⁸ Gaß,⁵⁹ Weippert⁶⁰ and Korpel.⁶¹ In 2019, however, Finkelstein, Naʾaman and Römer published an article in which they argue that ʾ is preceded by a vertical stroke, which is used as sentence divider in the Mesha inscription.⁶² They do not see any trace of letter between 𐤁 and this sentence divider but propose to reconstruct 𐤁𐤋 so as to read the name of the biblical king Balak.

Let us now try and examine this section using new imaging techniques. By optimizing lighting settings, some of the letters are easier to read (see Figure 8). They appear even more clearly using specular enhancement (see Figure 9).

⁵⁷ Herbert Donner and Wolfgang Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften, Band 1*, 5., erweiterte und überarbeitete Auflage. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002), 42.

⁵⁸ Aḥituv, *Echoes from the Past*, 393, 395, 417.

⁵⁹ Gaß, *Die Moabiter*, 10, 48.

⁶⁰ Manfred Weippert, *Historisches Textbuch zum Alten Testament*, Grundrisse zum Alten Testament 10 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 248.

⁶¹ Marjo Korpel, "The Ariel of His David," *Biblische Notizen* 177 (2018): 62.

⁶² Israel Finkelstein, Nadav Naʾaman, and Thomas Römer, "Restoring Line 31 in the Mesha Stele: The 'House of David' or Biblical Balak?," *Tel Aviv* 46.1 (2019): 6.



*Figure 8. RTI photograph of the Mesha inscription, end of line 31.
(© West Semitic Research / Michael Langlois)*



*Figure 9. RTI photograph of the Mesha inscription, end of line 31, after
specular enhancement. (© West Semitic Research / Michael Langlois)*

On the right-hand side, ה is complete, with the top of its head above the crack. It is followed by the usual large dot as word separator. The following letter has a triangular head above the crack, with a descender that disappears after the break; at this stage, ב or ך are possible. The third letter is barely visible, and it is unclear whether the large recesses are due to engraving, as other strokes are much thinner. If this is the case, the traces are best read as ת or ן, though כ or ש are not impossible.⁶³ The lower part of the letter is lost below the break. The text resumes on the left-hand side, right after the break, with a clear ו. The vertical stroke that precedes, and which Finkelstein, Naʾaman and Römer understood as sentence divider, is actually not on the stone itself but in the reconstructed part; its possible presence on the original stone must therefore be assessed on the squeeze, which will be examined below.

The letter that follows ו features a triangular head and no descender, which is indicative of ד. It is followed by a large dot indicating the end of the word. This divider has apparently escaped the eye of a number of scholars, since it is incompatible with such aforementioned readings as בן.דדן.ודד (Smend and Socin), [חורן].בני (Nordlander), [קדר]בשםו (Halévy), or [ה]וד[ה]בת (Naʾaman). It was, however, partially visible on Dussaud's plate, and appears more clearly now thanks to RTI. Though it is slightly damaged on the left-hand side, its position, diameter, depth and perfectly circular shape cannot be coincidental. Its reading is thus secure.

Since part of the stone is missing, let us look at the squeeze (see Figure 10).

⁶³ The reconstruction of ל is less likely, as the ascender would probably be more visible above the line, rather than eroded as suggested by Finkelstein, Naʾaman, and Römer, "Restoring Line 31 in the Mesha Stele," 6. A faint diagonal trace is visible where one would expect such an ascender, but it is slightly offset and seems raw rather than due to engraving; I doubt that it preserves the top of a ל.

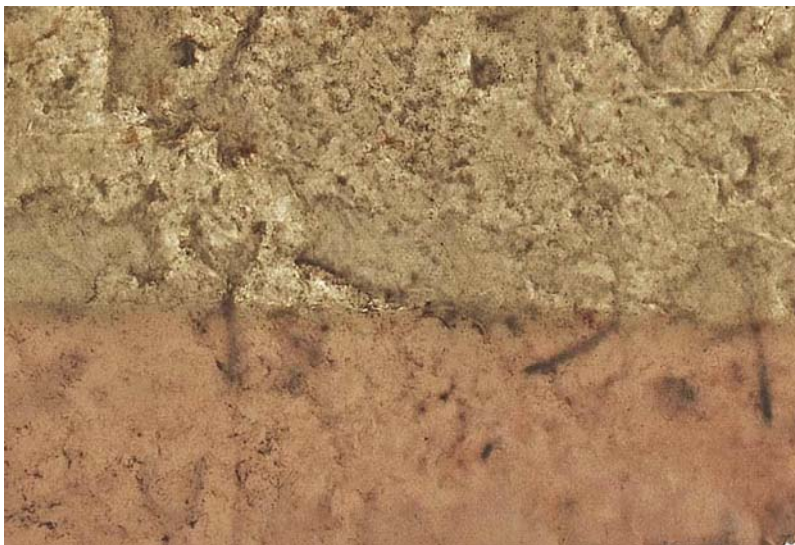


Figure 10. Digital photograph of the squeeze of the Mesha stele in the Louvre Museum with backlighting and further digital enhancement, end of line 31. (© Musée du Louvre / Philippe Fuzeau / Michael Langlois)

The squeeze is not in very good condition and a long horizontal fold complicates our task. On the right-hand side, the η and dot are quite visible. The following letter exhibits a slanted descender more visible than the head, whose triangular shape was already observed on the stone itself. Combining the two documents, reading \beth is now secure. The following letter has apparently left no imprint; there are darker traces along the fold, but they could be due to the folding rather than any engraving on the stone. This is a recurring problem with backlit images: darker areas are indicative of a thicker squeeze but do not necessarily correspond to the inscription's engraving. Other factors may account for such thickness: varying pressure when making the squeeze, folding and stretching of the squeeze after it has dried (or, in this case, even before it dried), and so on.

One should note, however, that there is no descender below the fold, which reduces the likelihood of reading \beth or \beth , as suggested above. The fourth letter, on the other hand, seems to feature a triangular head quite visible before \beth . It could be \beth , δ , or γ . Below the fold, darker traces could reveal the end of a descender, but it seems

too slanted for ך and does not feature the elbow characteristic of ך. Moreover, there are other traces on its left, in the shape of a triangle; it's almost as though there were a small ך below the baseline. Since a scribal correction or addition is unlikely, these traces are probably due to the conditions in which the squeeze was made and conserved. Let us, therefore, check these suspicious pseudo-strokes with RTI (see Figure 11).



Figure 11. RTI photograph of the squeeze of the Mesha stele in the Louvre Museum, end of line 31. (© West Semitic Research / Michael Langlois)

What looked like a miniature ך on the backlight photograph does not appear on RTI, no matter the rendering settings: the pseudo-descender is visible but hollow rather than embossed as would be expected for engraving—compare other strokes such as the shaft of ך that follows or the descender of ך on the right-hand side. Backlit images do not distinguish between these two phenomena, which may lead to such confusion. This further weakens the possibility of reading an abnormal ך before ך.⁶⁴ The triangular head above the

⁶⁴ This pseudo-descender might be responsible for the “vertical stroke” seen by Finkelstein, Na’aman and Römer on the reconstructed part of the stele. Even if

fold is, however, visible with RTI. As a matter of fact, the right stroke was absent from the backlit photograph but is quite discernible here, and its angle is indicative of a ט.

The third letter, between כ and ט, remains unclear. No descender seems visible, and traces above the fold are less discernible than on the stone itself. Another squeeze of this area is conserved at the French Academy of Inscriptions and Fine Letters, where Clermont-Ganneau's archives are stored. We thus photographed it using RTI, and I virtually added it on top of the other squeeze (see Figure 12). The reading can further be improved using specular enhancement (see Figure 13).

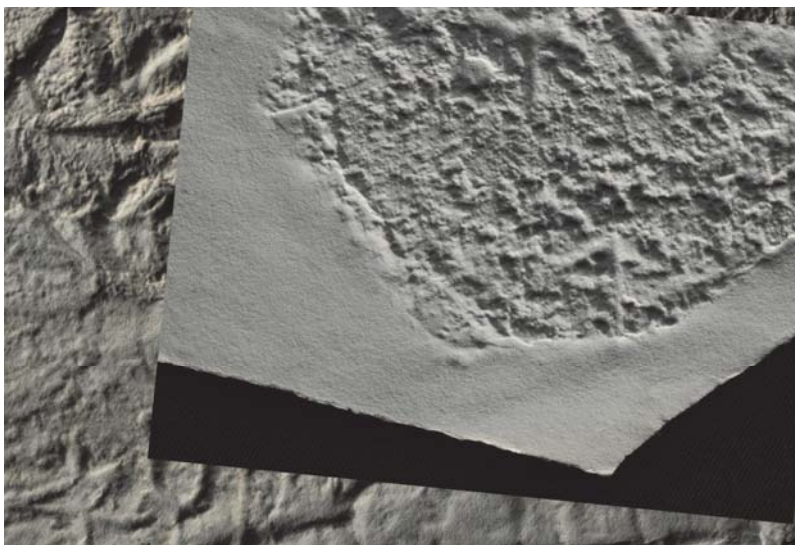


Figure 12. Top layer: RTI photograph of the squeeze of the Mesha stele at the French Academy of Inscriptions and Fine Letters, end of line 31.

(© West Semitic Research / Michael Langlois)

such a stroke were present, it would not be a sentence divider, otherwise the new sentence would start with an unintelligible two-letter word טי followed by a word divider. Unfortunately, Finkelstein, Na'aman and Römer have not seen this word divider (for which see above).

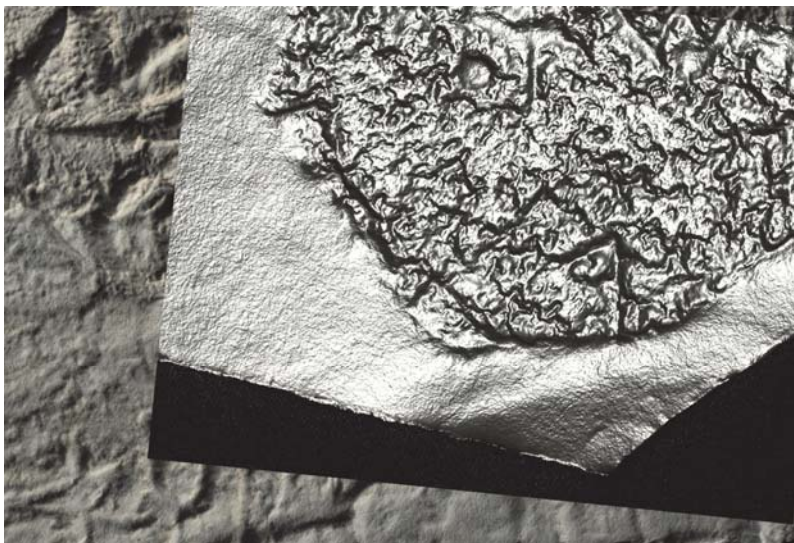


Figure 13. Top layer: RTI photograph of the squeeze of the Mesha stele at the French Academy of Inscriptions and Fine Letters, end of line 31, after specular enhancement. (© West Semitic Research / Michael Langlois)

The two recesses observed on the stone itself are present and seem less thick, which may indicate that they are deeper than initially thought and could well be due to engraving. Moreover, they cross each other and seem to continue further, which would confirm that the letter should be read as **𐤒**. Even though this decipherment remains uncertain, it seems to be the best way to account for the evidence at our disposal.

At the end of this study, let us try and combine these observations in order to reconstruct the text. First, I combined the various images at my disposal, giving priority to the stone itself, whose pieces I realigned thanks to the squeeze. Second, I filled the missing parts with the squeeze (see Figure 14). Finally, I produced a digital drawing of this section (see Figure 15).



Figure 14. Digital combination of RTI photographs of the Mesha stele and squeeze in the Louvre Museum, end of line 31, after specular enhancement and realignment. (© West Semitic Research / Michael Langlois)

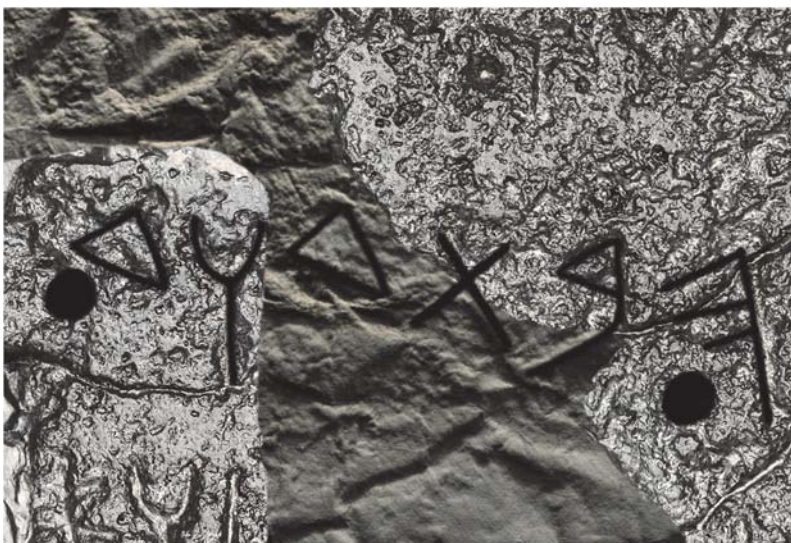


Figure 15. Digital drawing of the proposed reading, end of line 31 of the Mesha inscription. (© West Semitic Research / Michael Langlois)

Between the two clear word dividers, the best reading seems to be **בתדוד**. The reading offered for each letter was already proposed by the first generation of scholars working on the Mesha stele: Clermont-Ganneau read the **ב** and the **ו**, Smend and Socin read **ד** after the **ו**, as did Lidzbarski, who also suggested reading **ת** after **ב**. However, it is Lemaire who first proposed to read the whole sequence as **בתדוד**. My own decipherment, based on new imaging techniques, strengthens this hypothesis. It also excludes Na'aman's similar reading of **בת דודה** or his newer reading of **בלקוד** with Finkelstein and Römer, none of which takes into account the presence of a word divider after **ד**—notwithstanding the erroneous identification of a sentence divider before **ו** in the latter reading.

Indeed, the **וד** ending leaves little lexical choice beside names such as **אזתוד** “Azatiwada” (KAI 26) or **ארוד** “Arwad” (Ezek 27:8). The initial **ב** could thus be a preposition followed by a four-letter name ending in **וד**. Taking into account the traces observed above, **תדוד** or **נדוד** are good candidates (with a preference for **תדוד**) but these names are, to my knowledge, unattested. The sequence of five letters is thus better interpreted as a compound of **בת**, “house” or “daughter” (or, alternatively, **בן** “son”) followed by **דוד** “pot,” “beloved,” “paternal uncle,” or “Daw*ḥ*d,” which is also favored by the context (cf. **דודה** at the end of l. 12).

The backlit photograph of the squeeze (see Figure 10) offers no evidence that there was a word divider between those two words.⁶⁵ As a matter of fact, the only known parallel in contemporary inscriptions—**ביתדוד** in the Aramaic Tel Dan stele—lacks a word divider.⁶⁶ If, then, **בתדוד** or **בנדוד** is one word, it may be a proper name such as “Bathdaw*ḥ*d,” “Bendaw*ḥ*d” or “Bethdaw*ḥ*d,” meaning “the daughter/son/house of the beloved/uncle/Daw*ḥ*d.” The latter, “Bethdaw*ḥ*d,” is favored by its occurrence on the Tel Dan stele, spelled **ביתדוד** with a **י** indicating that the first component is “house” rather than “daughter.”

⁶⁵ Cp. Puech, who reconstructs “.בת.דוד.” with three word dividers in “La stèle araméenne de Dan,” 227 n. 31.

⁶⁶ Biran and Naveh, “An Aramaic Stele Fragment from Tel Dan,” 87–90, 93.

If this name is a toponym, the sentence could mean something like “And Hawranen dwelt in it, <that is,> Bethdaw*ḥ*d.”⁶⁷ If it is an anthroponym or a theonym, the sentence may be translated “And Hawranen, Bethdaw*ḥ*d dwelt in it.” This interpretation better fits the context of the inscription. The existence of a theonym Bethdaw*ḥ*d and its mention here are possible, though quite hypothetical;⁶⁸ there is, however, another solution: contemporary parallels show that a dynasty or a kingdom may be referred to by the name of its founder using the syntagm “house of PN.”⁶⁹ Bethdaw*ḥ*d could thus be a metonymic name designating a dynasty founded by a certain King Daw*ḥ*d.⁷⁰ If it functions as the subject of ישב “he dwelt,” rather than in apposition to בה, Bethdaw*ḥ*d would thus refer to one or several rulers of this Davidic dynasty who occupied Hawranen. The alternative reading בנדוד “Bendaw*ḥ*d” seems slightly less probable, as explained above, but is nonetheless possible and would likewise designate a Davidic ruler.

Of course, such mention of the house or son of David does not solve issues related to the historicity of various biblical traditions regarding David, his kingdom and his dynasty. Those fascinating questions are beyond the scope of the present essay but they do

⁶⁷ The mention of ביתדוד in the Tel Dan inscription is thus understood as a toponym—perhaps the name of a region—by Frederick H. Cryer, “On the Recently-Discovered ‘House of David’ Inscription,” *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 8.1 (1994): 16–18. ביתדוד is likewise interpreted as the name of a temple by Ernst Axel Knauf, Albert de Pury, and Thomas Römer, “*BaytDawīd ou *BaytDōd ? Une relecture de la nouvelle inscription de Tel Dan,” *Biblische Notizen* 72 (1994): 67. The same interpretation is adopted for the occurrence of בתדוד in the Mesha inscription by Niels Peter Lemche and Thomas L. Thompson, “Did Biran Kill David? The Bible in the Light of Archaeology,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 64 (1994): 12.

⁶⁸ A theonym Bethdaw*ḥ*d would be built on the same pattern as the theonym Bethel, i.e. Beth+DN, except that the base theonym would be Daw*ḥ*d instead of El. On Bethel and Daw*ḥ*d as theonyms, see e.g. s.v. “Bethel” and “Dod” in Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter Willem van der Horst, eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible (DDD)*, 2nd extensively rev. ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1999). But there are simpler explanations, with better parallels, as we will see.

⁶⁹ See e.g. Puech, “La stèle araméenne de Dan,” 227 n. 30.

⁷⁰ This is also the usage of בית דוד in 1 Kgs 12:19.20.26; 13:2; 14:8; 2 Kgs 17:21; Isa 7:2.13; etc.

not contradict the fact that Bethdaw*ḥ*d (or alternatively Ben-daw*ḥ*d), as a designation of one or more Davidic rulers, fits the context of the inscription well and is less hypothetical than the other explanations considered above. It will thus be adopted here.

Conclusion

A hundred and fifty years after its discovery, the Mesha stele remains one of the most important archaeological discoveries related to the Bible. Its decipherment is still debated but may now be improved using new imaging techniques. The three case studies presented in this essay demonstrate the usefulness of such tools. They also show the importance of combining various imaging techniques rather than using a single one.

Thanks to this novel methodology, which I developed and tested in this essay, new evidence confirms that המלכן “the kings” is the preferred reading in line 4, and that the beginning of line 12 must be read הקר.הית.לכמש “the city was *ḥ*given to Kemosh.” At the end of line 31, the best reading—though hypothetical—is בתדוד “Beth-daw*ḥ*d,” that is, “House of David,” a metonymy referring to Davidic rulers. With the Tel Dan inscription, the Mesha stele might be the earliest historical witness of a ruler named David who, in the ninth century BCE, was remembered as the founder of a Judahite dynasty.

In the era of digital humanities, the methodology presented here calls for a renewed study of this and other inscriptions. The results will benefit research in such disciplines as epigraphy, archaeology, history and religious studies.

The Tel 'Eton Bulla: A Revised Reading and Some Onomastic Remarks

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Résumé. Une bulle hébraïque, trouvée à Tel 'Eton en 2008, a été publiée par A. Faust et E. Eshel qui l'ont lue לשבניהו/סמך. Récemment, deux lectures divergentes ont été proposées : לשבניהו/יואב (proposée par D. Vainstub) et לשבניהו/[י]הואמ[ר] (proposée par R. Deutsch). Nous présentons notre lecture basée sur un examen direct de la bulle au microscope ainsi que sur des observations paléographiques. De plus, nous offrons quelques observations onomastiques sur les noms de personnes attestés en épigraphie judéenne et leur usage pour la lecture de nouvelles inscriptions.

Introduction

This article reexamines a Hebrew bulla found in 2008 at Tel 'Eton during excavations directed by A. Faust (Faust and Eshel 2012; Faust 2017).¹ The seal that impressed the bulla was arranged in a tripartite longitudinal layout with two double line dividers. In the upper

¹ We wish to express our gratitude to Professor Avraham Faust of Bar-Ilan University for allowing us to collate the bulla on January 1st, 2018, as well as providing us with good quality photos of the bulla. We would also like to thank Professor Sarah Pariente, Head of the Geomorphology and Soil Laboratory at Bar-Ilan University, for allowing us to use a microscope at her laboratory for the inspection of the bulla. Last but not least, we are grateful to our friend and colleague, Dr. Shira J. Golani, for reading a version of this article and adding her valuable insight.

register is a figural motif of a browsing doe (fig. 1).² The two registers below contain two personal names. As seen in the impression on the bulla, the seal was set within a bezel. This bezel was very thick, to the point of covering up the letters closest to the edge of the seal and, as a consequence, blurring these letters in the impression on the bulla, making them relatively difficult to identify.



Figure 1. The bulla from Tel 'Eton (scale 3:1). Photo by Z. Radovan.
Courtesy of A. Faust/the Tel 'Eton excavation project

The bulla is safely dated by stratigraphy: it was found in a building that was destroyed, according to the excavators, by the Assyrians in the late 8th century BCE (Faust and Eshel 2012: 63–64).³ In addition to the archaeological and palaeographical dating, the very

² Bullae combining iconographic motifs and inscriptions are uncommon in Judah. Specifically, the depiction of a grazing or browsing doe is more common on seals with Hebrew script than on non-Hebrew seals (Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 354–355). For the figural motif of grazing horned quadrupeds, whether male or female, on Judahite seals and bullae, including a survey of the specimens found in controlled excavations and a discussion of its iconographic meaning, see Ornan (2016: 279–302). To the glyptic finds listed by Ornan should now be added two additional bullae fragments from the Ophel, see Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie (2018: 266–271, n^o B12 and B17), as well as four bullae from Lachish, see Klingbeil *et al.* (2019: 49–54).

³ Given the evidence available in 2012, Katz and Faust were inclined to attribute this destruction to Sennacherib's campaign. However, in later publications and personal communication, Faust concludes that this destruction is earlier than Sennacherib's campaign (Katz and Faust 2012: 48; Faust *et al.* 2017: 137).

combination of script and iconography on the same seal is also indicative of a relatively early date in the 8th century BCE (Faust and Eshel 2012: 67; cf. Barkay 1992: 350–351; Reich and Shukron 2009: 361–362).

The name on the bulla was read by Faust and Eshel as *לשבניהו/סמך*, “Belonging to Šbnyhw (son of) Smk”. In a recent article, however, D. Vainstub (2017) suggested a different reading: *לשבניהו יואב*, “Belonging to Šbnyhw (son of) Yw^b”. Recently, R. Deutsch offered a third reading: *לשבניהו [י]הואב*, “Belonging to Šbnyhw (son of) [Y]hw^m[r]”.⁴ Based on a direct collation of the bulla at Bar-Ilan University, we can now present our own, new reading for the bulla, different from all preceding readings:

לשבניהו/י]הואב
Belonging to Šbnyhw/[Y]hw^b.



Figure 2. The Tel 'Eton bulla. Drawing by Anat Mendel-Geberovich

Palaeography

Line 1 contains beautifully engraved, dainty letters. In line 2, the letters are larger and slightly coarser (fig. 2). Vainstub is of the opinion that the difference in letter size between the two lines is deliberate and reflects planning, on the part of the engraver, to fit

⁴ Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research, Boston, November 16, 2017.

each name in its respective “row”, within the available width of the seal (Vainstub 2017: 323). Moreover, our collation of the bulla leads to the conclusion that the letters of line 2 were more deeply engraved upon the seal.

While the common reading of the last letter of line 1 as a *waw* is palaeographically questionable, nonetheless, it can be suggested with certainty, due to the extreme ubiquity of the theophoric suffix יהו versus the rarity of יה in Judahite personal names (Golub 2014: 628–633).

Line 2: as said above, the first letter of line 2 was hidden behind the bezel on which the seal was mounted and, consequently, is blotted out in the impression on the bulla. In addition, the location of the initial letter *lamed* in line 1 indicates that there was enough room at the beginning of line 2 for an additional letter, now missing. Hence, our reconstruction of the theophoric element at the beginning of the patronym is most certainly יהו[י], and not יו as suggested by Vainstub. Vainstub’s letter *yod* is, in fact, a partially preserved *he*.

As for the letter read by Faust and Eshel as a *samek*, we agree with Vainstub in reading it as an *aleph*. As Vainstub notes, although the lower horizontal stroke of *alephs* normally does not cross the vertical shaft to continue leftwards, there are some provenanced examples where it does cross it (Avigad and Sass 1997: n° 448, 595). In our opinion, it is less likely a *samek*, since provenanced attestations of *samek* on glyptic finds from the 8th and 7th centuries BCE (Avigad and Sass 1997: n° 59, 448, 498, 588; Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 315–329, n° B14⁵-B16, B18, B28, B43; Ben-Ami and Misgav 2016: 105*; Vainstub and Ben-Shlomo 2016: 156; Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2018: 259–263, n° B4–B8⁶) usually consist of three short horizontals above the downstroke, not two.⁷ Moreover, the majority of those *sameks* also have a cursive tick in the lowest horizontal (Avigad and Sass 1997: n° 59, 448, 498, 588; Mazar and

⁵ Bulla B14 was found in Locus L2014 in a Babylonian context, however according to the excavators this bulla may nevertheless be dated to the Iron Age II (Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 229, 315; Mazar 2015: 25, 44).

⁶ Bulla B5 was found out of context, in a post-Byzantine foundation trench. See Mazar and Lang (2018: 192).

⁷ Avigad and Sass (1997: n° 85), the seal of ʾsp has an exceptional *samek* with only two horizontals.

Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 315–329, n° B14, B16, B18, B28, B43; Ben-Ami and Misgav 2016: 105*; Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2018: 259–263, n° B4–B8), missing in our case—making it difficult to read this letter as a *samek*.

The head of the next letter was not fully preserved. We agree with Vainstub that *bet* is the likeliest reading. We would then arrive at the reading יהואב.

The last sign is a space filler that serves to balance the line, since there are 7 letters in line 1 and only 5 letters in line 2. Our collation of the bulla under a microscope shows that it is not a decorative dot (Vainstub 2017: 325), but rather, an elongated sign, such as the signs attested on glyptic finds of the 8th and 7th century in Judah (Winderbaum 2015: *passim*; Keel 1998).⁸

Onomastics

שבניהו (Biblical שְׁבַנְיָהוּ [1 Chr 15:24])—the name of the seal's owner—comprises three elements: שוב-נא-יהו meaning “do come back, O Yhwh” (Albertz and Schmitt 2012: 583). שבניהו is a popular Judahite name: seven other individuals bearing this name, or its shorter form שבניה, appear in epigraphic artifacts unearthed in Judahite sites from the 8th to the early 6th centuries.⁹ In addition to the name שבניהו, its root שוב is popular in Judah: fourteen additional individuals bearing names derived from this root, such as אלישב, שבאל, שבי, and שבנא are mentioned in artifacts from Judahite sites.¹⁰ By contrast, the root שוב is absent from the onomasticon of epigraphic artifacts uncovered in Israelite sites.

יהואב, the patronym, meaning “Yhwh is [divine] father” (Albertz and Schmitt 2012: 580) is a common Judahite name: five indi-

⁸ Ariel Winderbaum, personal communication.

⁹ שבניהו appears in Arad (Renz 1995: 111–112), Ḥorvat 'Uza (Beit-Arieh 2007: 129–130), Jerusalem (Avigad and Sass 1997: n° 150, 688; Ben-Ami and Misgav 2016: *105–*106), and Lachish (Avigad and Sass 1997: n° 416). An attestation of one person bearing the name שבניה was found in Tell Judeideh and Lachish (Lipschits et al. 2010: 23).

¹⁰ See Golub (2017a: 36–58, Appendix A).

viduals bearing the name יהואב appear in epigraphic artifacts unearthed in Judahite sites from the 8th to the early 6th centuries BCE.¹¹ The use of personal names equating the divine father with another god is common in other Levantine onomastica, such as Ammonite, Aramaic, and Phoenician (Albertz and Schmitt 2012: 576–577, table 4.1.1). In the Bible, no יהואב is found, but the parallel name אביהו does occur in the context of First Temple period Judah: it was one of the names by which a Judahite King occurs (2 Chr 13:20,21; but note the more common attestation of his name אביה, in 1 Chr 3:10; 13 *passim*; cf. also 1 Kgs 14:31; 15:1,7,8).

By contrast, יואב, the patronym according to Vainstub's reading, despite its biblical occurrence in a Judahite context (1 Sam 26:6 and 2 Samuel *passim*) is absent from Iron Age II epigraphic evidence (Vainstub 2017: 329). Moreover, יו is a characteristic Israelite element of theophoric names and is concentrated in Samaria and Ḥorvat Teman (Kuntillet 'Ajrud), while יהו and יה are unique to Judahite names.¹² Among some 300 individuals bearing theophoric names mentioned in artifacts from Judah, only three contain יו in their name (Golub 2014: 627–633). While Vainstub gives a different explanation for each of these three יו occurrences (2017: 329–330), we suggest that these names all belong to Israelites who resettled in Judah after the fall of Israel (Finkelstein 2013: 155). In addition, only one case of an individual with יהו in his name and יו in his father's name has been found in the entire Judahite epigraphic evidence: שמעיהו (son of) יועזר, mentioned in the 7th century BCE papyrus from Wadi Murabba'at (Ahituv 2008: 215). No additional example is attested in hundreds of provenanced Iron Age II seals, stamp seals, ostraca, or other inscribed artifacts. Therefore, in light of the epigraphic evidence, the reading שבניהו (son of) יואב is unlikely, while our proposed reading, שבניהו (son of) יהואב, fits better within the characteristics of the Judahite onomasticon of the Iron Age II.

¹¹ יהואב is found in both Arad (Ahituv 2008: 140–141, 145–148, 151) and Jerusalem (Avigad and Sass 1997: n° 427, 447). Attestations of two other Judahites who bore the parallel name אביהו—with a suffixed instead of prefixed יה—were also found: one from Ḥorvat 'Uza (Ahituv 2008: 168–17) and another from Arad (Renz 1995: 395–396).

¹² For attestations of יו in Judahite names mentioned in the Bible in the context of the First Temple period, see Golub (2017b: 4).

Conclusions

According to the stratigraphic context, the Tel 'Eton bulla is dated to the end of the 8th century BCE. In regard to onomastics, the bulla fits well within the collection of glyptic, as well as general epigraphic finds from Judahite sites: both names on the bulla contain the element יהו; both are common in Judah; and the formula of a seal owner's name followed by his father's name is also typical. Our reading, לשבניהו/[י]הוואב, based on a direct collation of the bulla, is supported by the prevalence of the theophoric element יהו in contemporary glyptic finds. From the perspective of its iconography, the bulla belongs to a small collection of Judahite inscribed seal impressions that include iconography and, in particular, to an ever-growing group of Hebrew bullae depicting grazing animals.

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The Isaac Story (Genesis 26) and the Land of Gerar

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Abstract. *This article suggests that the identification of Gerar at Tell Jemmeh and the elucidation of the Assyrian operations on the empire's border with Egypt are the keys to the interpretation and dating of the original Isaac story (Genesis 26). The story reflects the time of the establishment of Gerar as centre of an Assyrian estate that developed in the Nahal Besor region. Although the story is wholly legendary, it reflects the political and social reality of the time in which it was composed and should be dated to the mid-seventh century BCE.*

Résumé. *Le présent article suggère que l'identification de Guérar avec Tell Jemmeh et l'éluclidation des opérations assyriennes aux frontières de l'empire avec l'Égypte sont les clefs de l'interprétation et de la datation du récit original d'Isaac (Genèse 26). Ce récit reflète l'époque de l'établissement de Guérar comme centre assyrien dans la région de Nahal Besor. Bien que ce récit soit totalement fictif, il reflète la réalité politique et sociale de l'époque où il a été composé et doit être daté du milieu du VII^e siècle avant Jésus-Christ.*

Most of the stories about Isaac are included in the histories of Abraham and Jacob and form part of their story-cycles. In the Patriarchal narratives, Isaac mainly plays a secondary role, a linking chain within the sequence of the three patriarchs. Only one chapter (Genesis 26) is entirely dedicated to Isaac's history as an independent figure, and this chapter is the focus of my study.

The following short presentation illustrates the secondary role of Isaac in the story-cycles of Abraham and Jacob (for recent analysis, see Albertz 1987: 292-294; Römer 2016, with earlier literature).

In the Abraham narratives, Isaac is mentioned as the promised son (Gen 17:15-21; 18:1-15) who, in fulfilment of the divine promises, was born to his elderly parents (21:1-7). He then appears in the stories of Hagar's expulsion (21:9-10) and of the Aqedah (chapter 22). In Genesis 24, Abraham orders his servant to find a bride

for Isaac in Aram. When the bride, Rebekah, arrives at the Negev, she meets Isaac, joins the family, and the couple gets married (24:61-67). Finally, when Abraham died, his sons Isaac and Ishmael bury him in the Cave of Machpelah (25:8-9). In all these stories, Isaac's parents—Abraham in particular—play the major role, whereas Isaac is a secondary figure, with no characteristics defining him as a prominent figure in the plot.

Following the marriage of Isaac to Rebekah, the author relates the bareness of Rebekah, Isaac's prayer to YHWH, and the birth of the twin sons, Esau and Jacob (25:19-28). Whereas Isaac prefers Esau, the skillful hunter, Rebecca favors the quiet one who dwells in the tent (25:28). Outwardly, this episode opens the story-cycle of Isaac, but except for the in-between story in Chapter 26, it actually opens the history of Jacob, in which Isaac plays a passive role. Thus, in the next episode (27:1-40), Isaac is depicted as an old, blind, helpless figure. Rebecca and Jacob took advantage of his blindness, disguised Jacob as Esau, and thereby stole the blessing of the firstborn son. In light of Esau's hatred and the threat to his life, Jacob fled to Aram and stayed there for twenty years. Upon his return, he met Isaac at Mamre, near Hebron (35:27). After an unspecified time, Isaac died and was buried by his two sons in the Cave of Machpelah (35:28-29).

As my discussion focuses only on the history of Isaac as depicted in Chapter 26, I exclude details of his history that appear within the histories of Abraham and Jacob. Exceptions are only three episodes that appear in both the histories of Abraham and Isaac: the promise of blessing and posterity, the scene of the wife-sister, and the alliance with Abimelech of Gerar. In these episodes, we must investigate which version is the original and which was created by the reworking of the original story.

In what follows, I first analyse the literary structure of Chapter 26, including the three scenes that also appear in the history of Abraham, and try to reconstruct the scope of the original story. I then proceed to investigate the biblical and extra-biblical sources that mention the city and the land of Gerar and their significance for establishing the city's location. Next, I present in detail the relevant archaeological and historical data for the history of Gerar, in particular the role of the Assyrians in the emergence of the city

and the prosperity of the surrounding region. Finally, I propose the likely dating for when the story of Isaac at Gerar might have been composed in writing and discuss the contemporaneous reality reflected through the plot of this legendary story.

Genesis 26: The Original Story

The story of Isaac and Abimelech of Gerar opens with an exposition (26:1): “There was a famine in the land in addition to the previous famine which occurred in the time of Abraham, so Isaac went to Abimelech, king of the Philistines at Gerar”. The redactor who shaped the story in its final form knew the account of Abraham’s migration to Egypt and attempted to combine together the two migration stories. The original introduction to the Isaac story was shorter: “There was a famine in the land so Isaac went to Abimelech, king of the Philistines at Gerar”. The omission of the late insertion, which all commentators since the beginning of modern research observed (Dillmann 1875: 337; Gunkel 1917: 300; Skinner 1930: 363-364), illustrates the task at hand: to reconstruct the original story of Isaac by omitting the additions and elaborations inserted there when that story was combined with the Abraham story-cycle.

In the early stages of research, when the division of the Torah into four major sources was the widely-accepted hypothesis, scholars assumed that Chapter 26 was written by the Yahwist and that the blessing to Isaac (vv. 3-5), or at least part of it, was an integral part of the original story (e.g., Gunkel 1917: 300; Skinner 1930: 363-364; von Rad 1972: 270-271). However, v. 6 (“So Isaac remained in Gerar”) is the natural continuation of v. 1, whereas the blessing in vv. 3-5 interrupts the sequence. Moreover, the promise to Isaac (vv. 3, 5) includes explicit references to Abraham; hence the suggestion that these verses were inserted into the original story when it was integrated with the Abraham narratives (Blum 1984: 298-302; Coats 1985: 79-80; Westermann 1985: 424-425; Schmidt 1998: 168-169; Boase 2001: 326).

The motif of the sister-wife that appears in three episodes—two in Abraham's story-cycle (Gen 12:10-20; 20) and the third in Isaac's story (26:7-11)—was discussed repeatedly in biblical research (see Van Seters 1975: 167-191; Schmidt 1998: 168-201, with earlier literature). Scholars examined at length the chronological and literary relations of the three episodes. It is widely accepted that within the Abraham story-cycle, the story in Gen 12:10-20 is earlier than that of Chapter 20 (see, e.g., Van Seters 1975: 171-173; Fischer 1994: 191-230; Wöhrle 2011: 34-38, with earlier literature in n. 27). In contrast, the literary and chronological relations between the Abraham and Isaac stories is hotly debated. Some suggest that the story of Abraham in 12:10-20 is the original, and the wife-sister account was inserted into Chapter 26, along with the motif of the divine blessing in vv. 3-5 (see Van Seters 1975: 167-191; Coats 1985: 71-80; Fischer 1994: 175-230; Boase 2001: 323-326; Wöhrle 2011: 33-34 n. 25). Conversely, others argue that the story in 26:7-11 is the original and, as Abraham became the most remarkable ancestral figure in the south, Isaac's wife-sister story was worked into the story of Abraham's migration to Egypt (Noth 1981: 105-115; Blum 1984: 304-311; Schmidt 1998: 168-201).

Common to all three wife-sister stories is the motif of the Patriarchs' misjudgement of the behaviour of their foreign (Egyptian and Philistine) hosts. Yet in the two stories of Abraham (12:10-20; 20), his conduct put his wife in real danger, which gives the story a sense of reality. Conversely, in the Isaac story (26:7-11), Rebekah is not really endangered. Also, Isaac's response to the accusation of Abimelech in 26:9-10 is clearly a filling of the narrative gap of Abraham's silence in 12:18; an assumption that the literary borrowing was the other way around, from the account of Isaac to that of Abraham, is unlikely (Boase 2001: 325). Finally, the episodes of the digging of wells and the political relations of Isaac and Abimelech are narrated in a concrete, factual manner, whereas the scene of Abimelech, who looks out through the window and sees Isaac "fondling Rebekah his wife", is written in a different style. Thus, not only is the wife-sister episode alien to the plot of the Isaac story, but also its style differs from that of the rest of the story.

George Coats examined the structure and internal coherence of the three accounts and concluded (1985: 79) that "[t]he Abraham

tale reveals a structure that is simple, facilitating the goals of the genre... The Isaac story is more diffuse in structure, still a tale but not serving the function of a tale so clearly. The genre is breaking down here showing signs of development into something new". In this light, he suggested that the Isaac wife-sister episode is the latest among the three.

Jacob Wöhrle (2011) posited that all three wife-sister stories were composed no earlier than the exilic period and relate situations that befit the reality of the diaspora. If this is indeed the case, it contradicts the suggestions of those scholars who on the one hand date the Isaac story to the pre-exilic period, and on the other, posit that the wife-sister episode was originally part of it (Blum 1984: 304-307; Schmidt 1998: 182-184, 200; Römer 2016: 4-5).

Considering all these arguments jointly, I endorse the suggestion of those scholars who posited that alongside vv. 3-5, the wife-sister episode (vv. 7-11) was also inserted into the Isaac story when the latter was integrated into the history of Abraham and is not part of the original plot of the story.

Many scholars observed that vv. 15 and 18 in Chapter 26 are late additions to the story, inserted to fasten the connection between the Abraham and Abimelech covenant stories (see the list of literature in Schmidt 1998: 201-202 n. 116). Schmidt (1998: 202-203) further suggested that v. 14b ("and the Philistines envied him") is part of the insertion. However, this short statement might well have belonged to the original story and corresponds with the reaction of Abimelech to Isaac's unexpected enrichment (v. 16).

We must turn now to the literary relations between the Isaac and Abimelech covenant (Gen 26:26-31) and that of Abraham and Abimelech (21:22-34). Ludwig Schmidt (1998: 204-214) and Elisabeth Boase (2001: 327-330) discussed the two stories in detail and demonstrated that the Abraham story depends in its major themes and various details on the account in Chapter 26. As the two scholars' discussions are exhaustive and persuasive, I avoid repeating them here.

In sum, the original story in Chapter 26 probably includes vv. 1aα.b, 6, 9-14, 16-17, 19-23, 25-33. It relates Isaac's migration to Gerar, a town in Philistia, and his prospering there due to YHWH's blessing. His sudden enrichment raised the hostility of the local

people, following which the Philistine king (Abimelech) forced him to leave his country. In the course of his wandering eastwards along Naḥal Gerar, he excavated two wells of spring water, but the herdsmen of Gerar claimed ownership of the wells and he was forced to give them up. Isaac kept wandering eastward and dug a third well, evidently in a non-Philistine territory and hence undisputedly. Finally, he reached Beer-sheba and built an altar for YHWH. His fame reached Abimelech, who arrived with his councilor and army commander to Beer-sheba with the request to establish a non-violence treaty with Isaac. The latter made the Philistine delegates a feast, and after exchanging oaths the guests returned to their country. That same day, Isaac's servants found a well of spring water, and he named it שְׁבַע (a double meaning of seven [שבַּע] and oath [שבועה]), which gave its name to the city of Beer-sheba.

There are some literary parallels between the Isaac narrative and other biblical stories. Most obvious is the similarity between the treaty of Jacob and Laban in Mount Gilead (Gen 31:51-54) and that of Isaac and Abimelech at Beer-sheba. Both share three common elements: (a) the pact between representatives of two neighbouring nations; (b) the sacrificial meal; and (c) the mutual oaths. Likewise similar is the wording of the questions that Isaac posed to Abimelech and his officials in Gen 26:27 ("Why have you come to me, seeing that you hate me and have sent me away from you?") and that Jephthah posed to the elders of Gilead in Judg 11:7 ("Did you not hate me, and drive me out of my father's house? Why have you come to me now when you are in trouble?"). Finally, there is a remarkable similarity between vv. 12-14 and the introduction to the story of Job, both in terminology (compare vv. 13-14 to Job 1:3) and in the concept of God's blessing as the source of prosperity (compare v. 12 to Job 1:10).

Finally, a structural similarity exists between the Isaac story and the history of David, both of which took place in Philistia. David fled from his homeland and found shelter in the court of Achish of Gath, stayed for a short time in Gath (1 Sam 27:1-3), moved to a border town in Philistia (27:5-7), and after Saul's death returned to Hebron (2 Sam 2:1-3). In a similar manner, Isaac's story opens with his forced migration to Gerar, his short sojourn at Gerar, his travel

to the border of Philistia along Naḥal Gerar, and finally his return homeward to Beer-sheba.

These comparisons are not enough to suggest a literary dependence of the Isaac story on the episodes enumerated above. Rather, we should assume the existence of a stock of oral stories in Judah, from which an author could have selected motifs and literary elements and integrated them into his composition.

Gerar in Biblical and Extra-Biblical Sources

In clarifying the spatial dimension and political background of the Isaac story, we must first analyse the references to Gerar in biblical and extra biblical sources (for earlier literature, see Jericke 2013).

(a) Gerar in Biblical Historiography

According to the original Isaac story, Gerar was a Philistine city governed by Abimelech, “king of the Philistines” (v. 1). Following his expulsion from the city, Isaac left the place and camped at Naḥal Gerar (v. 17). He dug two wells in what the narrator considered a Philistine territory, but was forced to give them up (vv. 19-21). Then he dug a third well (Rehoboth), which, according to the logic of the story, was located outside of Philistia and therefore remained in his possession (v. 22). Finally, Isaac arrived at Beer-sheba and dug there a fourth well (vv. 23, 25b, 32-33). A quick glance at the map of the region shows that the most likely candidate for the biblical Naḥal Gerar is Naḥal Besor (Wādi Ghazzeh and Wādi esh-Shelaleh), which joins in the east to Naḥal Beer-sheba (Wādi Saba^c), on whose bank the city of Beer-sheba is located. If this is indeed the case, the city of Gerar must be sought near Naḥal Besor, the major wādi that crosses this peripheral region from Beer-sheba to Gaza and the Mediterranean.

The city of Gerar is also mentioned in the history of Abraham (Genesis 20). The story in Chapter 20 opens with the statement (v. 1), “From there Abraham journeyed toward the territory of the

Negeb and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur; and he sojourned in Gerar". In an earlier article (Na'aman 1980: 102-103), I suggested that this exposition originally opens a story of Abraham's return "from there"—that is, from Egypt—and his arrival at the Negeb region. Contrary to the modern use of the toponym Negev, which refers to the southern desert regions, biblical Negeb refers to the southernmost region of Canaan, in particular the Beer-sheba Valley.¹ The exposition in v. 1 relates that on his way from Egypt to the Negeb, Abraham passed Kadesh and arrived at Shur, a toponym which I identified at Naḥal Besor (Na'aman 1980: 100-105; contra Rainey 1982: 131-133). He then sojourned for many years at Gerar (Gen 20; 21:23, 34), and finally travelled to Beer-sheba, where he concluded a treaty with Abimelech of Gerar (21:22-32).

The account in Genesis 20 supports the conclusion drawn from the analysis of the Isaac story that the city of Gerar should be sought near Naḥal Besor, and that the two patriarchs stayed at that site for a long time.

According to Gen 10:19, the territory of the Canaanites extended "from Sidon, in the direction of Gerar, as far as Gaza ...". To clarify this statement, I suggest comparing it to three accounts that appear in the books of the Maccabees:

1. Antiochus VI nominated Simon as officer commanding the area from the Ladder of Tyre to the borders of Egypt (1 Macc 11:59).
2. Antiochus VII nominated Kendebaeus as commander-in-chief of the coastal zone (Pharalia) (1 Macc 15:38).
3. Antiochus Eupator left Hegemonides as governor of the region from Akko (Ptolemais) to Gerar (*Gerronoi*) (2 Macc 13:24).

The three texts describe in different manners the coastal region of Palestine that the Hellenistic sources called Pharalia. They indicate that the description "from Sidon, in the direction of Gerar, as far as Gaza" in Gen 10:19 also refers to the coastal region that later was called Pharalia. Gaza is presented in biblical (Gen 10:19) and Hasmonian (2 Macc 13:24) sources as a city located within the Land

¹ Throughout my article I differentiate between "Negeb", which designates the southernmost region of Canaan, and "Negev", which refers to the southern desert regions.

of Gerar.² For this reason the ruler of this region, probably the king of Gaza, is called in the Isaac story “king of the Philistines” (Gen 26:1, 8), and Gerar, where Abraham stays according to Gen 20, was located in the land of the Philistines (Gen 21:34).

In Gen 20:2, Abimelech is called “king of Gerar”. However, Gerar was never the seat of a king, and the narrator must have referred to the Land of Gerar rather than to the city. Moreover, historical Philistia was divided among several kingdoms, and the title “king of the Philistines” should be understood in a literary sense rather than as an accurate political designation. Abimelech, if indeed he was a historical figure, must have been the king of Gaza and Gerar must have been a city in his kingdom (as might be inferred from Gen 21:34; 26:1, 8). Since the authors of Genesis 10:10-20 and 26 located the city of Gerar at the centre of the stage, they emphasized its relation to the dominant king in the region.

The city of גֶּרָר mentioned in Josh 12:12 alongside Arad and Hormah might possibly be rendered גֶּרָר (given the usual confusion of Hebrew *dalet* and *resh*). However, as no version supports this reading, this rendering remains uncertain (see the debate between Aharoni [1956: 27; 1967: 209-210] and Kallai [1986: 356 n. 53]).

References to Gerar and its inhabitants appear in three episodes in the Book of Chronicles (for discussion, see Eph'al 1982: 65-70). These episodes deserve a detailed study, which is far beyond the scope of my article. Therefore, I discuss them in utter brevity, concentrating only on their contribution to the acquaintance of the region of Gerar at the time of the Chronicler (the late Persian or early Hellenistic period) and their application to the Isaac story.

According to the account of 1 Chr 4:39-41, the sons of Simeon expanded westward, to “the entrance of Gerar (LXX; MT Gedor), to the east of the valley (עַד לְמִזְרַח הַנָּיָא)”. The valley (נָיָא) in this context refers to Naḥal Gerar (Naḥal Besor = Wādi esh-Shelaleh), and the entrance of Gerar lies in its eastern side through which the sons of Simeon expanded westward, to the Land of Gerar. According to

² For the grammatical structure of Gen 10:19, compare Judg 11:33; 1 Sam 17:52; 27:8. All the available sources indicate that the city of Gerar is located east of Gaza. Hence, Gerar, which in Gen 10:19 is mentioned before Gaza, is necessarily a land, not a city (contra Jericke 2013: 57).

the Chronicler, the region was inhabited by two nomadic groups: the sons of Ham,³ who were black-skinned people, and the Me'unites, a tribal group referred to in an inscription of Tiglath-pileser III (Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 127 lines 22-23).⁴ The sons of Simeon attacked these nomadic groups, smote them, and used the occupied territories as pasture for their flocks.

A second episode is related in 2 Chr 14:8-14. According to the Chronicler, the Kushites under the leadership of Zerah attacked the Kingdom of Judah at the time of Asa, but were defeated and retreated to their towns. Asa pursued the attackers "as far as Gerar", smote all the villages in the surroundings of Gerar (סְבִיבוֹת גֶּרָר), took a heavy booty (flocks of sheep and camels), and returned homeward. The adverb סְבִיבוֹת ("round about [a centre]") defines the spatial relations of the centre to its periphery. Hence, the allusion to "all the cities round about Gerar" indicates that Gerar was the main centre around which small settlements inhabited by pastoral groups were located.

The third text describes the military success of Uzziah (2 Chr 26:7-8): "God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabs that dwelt in גִּוְר־בְּעַל, and against the Me'unites. The Me'unites (LXX) paid tribute to Uzziah, and his fame spread even to the border of Egypt, for he became very strong". The *Targum* in v. 7 reads *g'rar*, and in this light Rudolph (1955: 282) rendered it, "against the Arabs who dwelt in גֶּרָר and over (וְעַל) the Me'unites" (for this rendering, see the detailed discussion of Japhet 1993: 879-880).

If we accept the LXX rendering of 1 Chr 4:39 and the *Targum* for 2 Chr 26:7, a unified picture emerges from the three references to Gerar in the Book of Chronicles: the city was the centre of a region inhabited by groups of pastoral nomads that are called either by ethnic (Me'unites, Arabs) or by descriptive (black-skinned) names. These tribal groups lived in tents and used the area as pasturelands

³ In v. 41, the Masoretic Text states that the sons of Simeon "destroyed their tents" (וַיִּבְנוּ אֶת־אֹהֶל־יהִם); that is, the tents of the sons of Ham. Some scholars suggested correcting the text and rendering it, וַיִּבְנוּ אֶת־אֹהֶל־הָם ("destroyed the tents of Ham"), which would restore textual balance in this verse (see Japhet 1993: 125).

⁴ For the debate over the location of the Me'unites and their historical role in south Philistia, see Na'aman 1979: 70, 77; Eph'al 1982: 65-70, 219-220; Knauf 1985: 114-122; 1992: 801-802, with earlier literature.

for their flocks and camels. This picture corresponds well with the Abraham and Isaac narratives, which also emphasize the centrality of Gerar in this region and reflect the use of this region for animal husbandry. Other details of life in this region appear only in one of these two stories. The agricultural work at Gerar (Gen 26:12) and the digging of wells along the ravine of Nahal Gerar are narrated in the Isaac story; and the raids conducted by the pastoralist nomads are related in the Asa story.

All the economic and social details narrated in these sources are typical of the daily life in this peripheral zone that is located at the southern margin of the Land of Canaan. They supply a sense of reality to Isaac's story in which Gerar and its environment are located at the centre of stage.

(b) Roman and Byzantine Sources

Josephus (*Ant* VIII 294), when narrating the history of Asa, described Gerar as both a region and a town. Albrecht Alt (1929: 108-110 [reprint 1959: 467-468]; 1931: 212 [reprint 1959: 388-389]) posited that at a later time, in the Late Roman and Byzantine periods, the city of Gerar ceased to exist and only the imperial estate of *Saltus Gerariticus* bore its old name. However, the Madeba Map marks Gerar as a small town, located south of Orda; and Sozomenus, an ecclesiastical historian who wrote a church history in about 420 CE, relates that Sylvanus, the Egyptian, founded a monastery "at Gerar, in the wādi (*torrent*)" (Figueras 2000: 133, 305). Hence, Gerar was a small town in the Byzantine time, and the late authors remembered its location.

Concerning the district of Gerar (*Saltus Gerariticus*), in his *Onomasticon*, Eusebius of Caesarea described Gerar referred to in Gen 20:1 as follows (Freeman-Grenville, Chapman and Taylor 2003: 39): "From it [Gerar] the Geraritic region takes its name. It lies beyond Daroma, 25 milestones from Eleutheropolis [Beth Guvrin] to the north". Eusebius also noted that Abraham's "Well of the Covenant" [Gen 21:30], i.e., Beer-sheba, "is now called Berosoba in the Gerari-

tike" (Freeman-Grenville, Chapman and Taylor 2003: 92). This reference indicates that at least in the 4th century CE, the region of Gerar reached as far as Beer-sheba.

During the Byzantine period, the civil and ecclesiastic centre of this vast region, was at Orda (Khirbet 'Irq), located near Wādi esh-Shari'ah⁵ (Alt 1929; 1931: 204-215; 1932: 126-132; Möller and Schmitt 1976: 105-106; Tsafir, Di Segni and Green 1994: 198, with earlier literature). Its military centre was at Birsama (Khirbet el-Fār), near Naḥal Besor, where a regiment of Thamudian cavalry was stationed (Alt 1929: 99-115; 1931: 204-215; 1932: 126-132; Figueras 2000: 168-170). Many other Byzantine sources mention the region of Gerar, but they are not my concern in this article (for references, see Alt 1929; 1931; Avi-Yonah 1966: 123, 162-163; Schaefer 1979: 63-66, 71-83; Tsafir, Di Segni and Green 1994: 132-133, with earlier literature).

In the excavations conducted at Khirbet el-Fār (ancient Birsama), located in the southwestern Negev approximately five kilometers west of Naḥal Besor, a church with nine mosaic inscriptions was discovered (Tzaferis 1996, with earlier literature). One of the inscriptions states that the church was built by "the Comites of Helladios of Gerar (*Gerraron*)" (Tzaferis 1996: 76*-77*). Tzaferis observed that Helladios was the governor of the district of Gerar and his seat was at Orda; whereas Birsama, where the mosaics were discovered, was the seat of a select army unit that built the church.

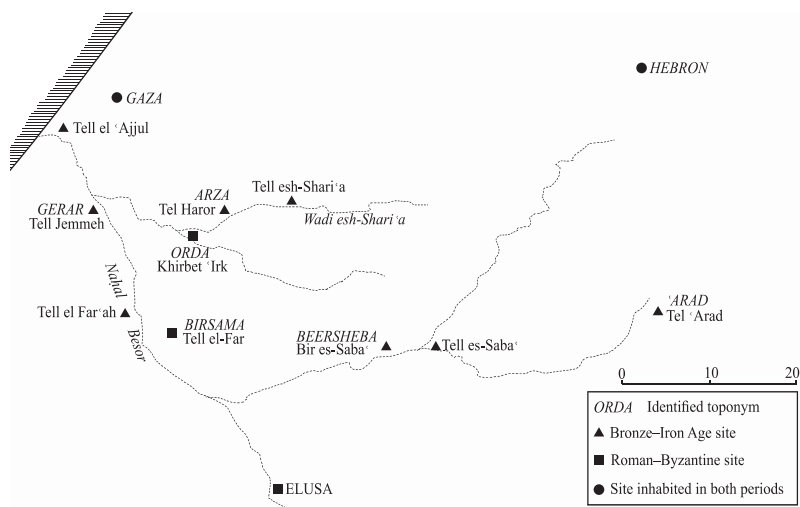
In sum, at the time when the biblical sources that mention Gerar were written, the city stood on the bank of Naḥal Besor (biblical Naḥal Gerar) and was the centre of a semi-arid district called by its name. According to the above-suggested interpretation of the histories of Abraham and Isaac as well as the Table of Nations (Gen 10:19), Gerar was included in the territory of Gaza. The Isaac story indicates that Gerar's eastern boundary overlapped with the western border of Judah. However, details of its northern border

⁵ Note that biblical Naḥal Gerar, which I identify with Naḥal Besor (Wādi Ghazzeḥ and Wādi esh-Shelaleh), is not the same as modern Naḥal Gerar (Wādi esh-Shari'ah), located north of it. To avoid confusion, I use the name Naḥal Gerar only for the biblical toponym, and call the modern Naḥal Gerar by its Arabic name (Wādi esh-Shari'ah).

are missing. If we assume continuity between the biblical and Roman-Byzantine sources, we might conclude that the border passed along the ravine of Wādī esh-Shari‘ah.

In the Roman-Byzantine period, the city of Gerar lost its centrality; yet the site is still mentioned in few sources, and its location is remembered. The district of *Saltus Gerariticus* was called after the city’s name, and at least during the time of Eusebius, it reached eastward as far as Beer-sheba.

The ancient name of Gerar possibly survived in the name Khirbet Umm Jerrar (Ḥorvat Gerarit), located 3.5 km north of Tell Jemmeh. Its site covered an area of about 12 acres and was settled in the Byzantine period (Porat 1977). Among the remains on the site are a large church with mosaics and the remains of various small buildings. Due to the similarity of names, Petrie (1928: 2) and Albright (1924: 156-157) identified this site with biblical Gerar—an identification that is not supported by the archaeological evidence. Rather, we may suggest that this is the site of Byzantine Gerar and that the name of historical Gerar was shifted to this place either in the Late Roman or the Byzantine periods.



Assyrian Operations on the Border of Egypt and the Emergence of the Estate of Gerar

For many years, Gerar was identified at Tel Haror (Tell Abu Hureirah), a site located on the bank of Wādi esh-Shari'ah, near the main road that passed from Gaza to Beer-sheba (Aharoni 1956; Oren 1992: 98-100; 1993a; Tsafir, Di Segni and Green 1994: 132-133), whereas Yurza/Arza was identified at Tell Jemmeh, a site located on the southern bank of Naḥal Besor (Mazar 1952; Na'aman 1979: 68-74; 1993: 111-112; 2016: 277-278; Aḥituv 1984: 202-203; Finkelstein 1996: 231-232, 255; Bagg 2007: 29-30; Ben-Shlomo and Van Beek 2014: 3). Recently, however, Ido Koch (2016: 91-93) presented a strong case for identifying Yurza/Arza at Tel Haror, located on Wādi esh-Shari'ah, about 4 km northeast of Khirbet 'Irq, the site of Roman Yarda⁶ and Byzantine Orda.⁷

The point of departure for Koch's relocation of Yurza/Arza is the small size of the LB settlement at Tell Jemmeh and the absence of typical LB I pottery at the site (see recently, Ben-Shlomo 2014a: 80; 2014b: 1054). The LB I-II settlement at Tel Haror was larger than that of Tel Jemmeh (Oren 1993a: 582) and better corresponds with the setting of a city-state (namely, Yurza). Decisive, however, is Koch's observation that Tel Haror is located near Khirbet 'Irq, the site of Byzantine Orda whose name is almost identical to that of Yurza/Arza. Khirbet 'Irq is a very large site (ca 50 hectares), and according to Byzantine sources, it was the civil and ecclesiastic centre of the Saltus Gerariticus, where the district's Bishop established his seat. In light of the close similarity of names, Koch (2016: 93) suggested that following the destruction of Yurza/Arza in the mid-seventh century BCE, its name was shifted from Tel Haror to the neighbouring site of Khirbet 'Irq, which inherited its place as the major centre of the Gerar district.

⁶ Josephus (*War* 3,51) wrote that "its [Judaea] southern boundary ... is marked by the village on the Arabian frontier, which the local Jews call Ya/orða". Mazar (1952: 51) and Avi-Yonah (1966: 162) identified it at Khirbet 'Irq, near Wādi esh-Shari'ah. For discussion of Ja/orða's location, see Möller and Schmitt 1976: 105-106.

⁷ For the interchange of names from Yurza/Yarda to Arza/Orda, see Na'aman 1980: 105; cf. Zadok 1976: 118-119.

This reasonable site identification creates the need to re-investigate the history of Tell Jemmeh, formerly identified with Yurza/Arza, and its relation to the city of Gerar, which, like Tell Jemmeh, must be sought near Naḥal Besor.

I open the discussion with an almost forgotten observation that Albright (1924: 156-157) made nearly one hundred years ago concerning the location of biblical Gerar:

In the first place, Tell es-Šerî'ah is in the heart of [the inheritance of] Simeon, while Gerar lay unquestionably ... to the west of Simeon, in territory which was not reckoned to Israel at all. Tell Jemmeh is in just the location which best fits the biblical references, and the name *Umm ej-Jerrār*, attached to the large Byzantine ruin in the vicinity, is exactly equivalent to Gerar-Gerara. Gen. 10:19 can only be explained as meaning that Gerar lay near the coast, south of Gaza, a localization that fits Tell Jemmeh, but never Tell es-Šerî'ah. Archaeologically, Tell Jemmeh is eminently satisfactory. It is a very large mound, much larger than Tell es-Šerî'ah, and containing remains of all periods from the Early Bronze to the Hellenistic, especially Late Bronze and Early Iron, which were clearly in evidence during Phythian-Adams' brief sounding of the mound.

In my earlier studies, I repeatedly identified Yurza/Arza at Tel Jemmeh. I now consider this identification incorrect and endorse Ido Koch's recent identification of the city at Tel Haror. Moreover, Albright's observations fit very well the conclusions drawn above about the place of Gerar in the biblical and post-biblical sources, and I accept it and use his identification as a point of departure for my analysis.

As I already discussed in detail the history and archaeology of Tell Jemmeh at the time of the Assyrian empire, I avoid reiterating the conclusions drawn in my earlier studies (Na'aman 1979: 68-74; 1993: 111-112; 2001: 260-266; 2004: 55-64; 2016: 277-278; Na'aman and Zadok 1988). My focus in this article is on the significance of the site's identification with Gerar for historical and biblical research. In the following discussion, I posit the following:

1. All biblical accounts of the city of Gerar refer to Tell Jemmeh;

2. These accounts could not have been written before the time of King Esarhaddon (680-669 BCE), who rebuilt the site and turned it into an important Assyrian centre in the region;

3. The Roman and Byzantine estate (*saltus*) of Gerar inherited the Assyrian estate, which Sargon II established in the late eighth century BCE and Esarhaddon expanded over the course of his reign.

The final report of the results of the excavations at Tell Jemmeh was published several years ago (Ben-Shlomo and Van Beek 2014), so all the data pertaining to the site are now available. According to this report, the Assyrian presence at Tell Jemmeh covered the Iron IIB-C period. Three archaeological phases (7-5) belong to the period of the Assyrian domination. As the last phase came to an end before the end of the Iron Age (Ben-Shlomo 2014b: 1063-1064; 2014c: 66-68), it is clear that the three phases should be dated to about 720-630 BCE. The last phase (5), which includes most of the major Assyrian style buildings and pottery as well as the two alphabetic ostraca, was probably built by Esarhaddon and marks the intensification of the Assyrian presence in the place. The vaulted building uncovered at the site was likely the seat of the Assyrian official who, from the time of Esarhaddon onward, supervised the region of Naḥal Besor.

The Archaeological report indicates that the Assyrian operations at the site, in particular those of Esarhaddon, transformed Tell Jemmeh into an important centre, with a series of public buildings, many prestigious artifacts, and a local elite that used these artifacts. Whether the extensive Assyrian operations in the place also involved a change of name, or (more likely) preserved its old name cannot be established with certainty. Nevertheless, the Assyrian operations in the region of Naḥal Besor, particularly at Gerar (Tell Jemmeh), formed a major turn in the history of the region. As a result of the Assyrian interests in this peripheral region, located on the border of the empire with Egypt, it began to fulfil an important strategic and economic role in the region of south Philistia. Hence, the sudden appearance of Gerar in the biblical texts should be connected to the Assyrian operations in this region and the

transformation of Gerar into an important Assyrian centre located on the bank of the Brook of Egypt (Naḥal Besor).

Arza and the Expansion of the Assyrian Estate of Gerar

I now turn to investigate the identification of Yurza/Arza at Tel Haror and its relations with the Assyrian centre of Gerar. I first analyse the references to Arza in the Neo-Assyrian texts and their significance for the history of the region in the seventh century BCE. Then, I examine the results of the excavations at Tel Haror and their contribution to elucidating the history of the site.

The earliest reference to Arza appears in a fragmentary letter from Nimrud (ND 2767), probably dated to the time of Sargon II. In his new edition of the letters unearthed at Calah and dated to the time of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II, Mikko Luukko (2012: 180)⁸ reproduced and partially improved the rendering of this broken letter. In light of the new transcription and translation, the final part of the letter (rev. 1-11) might be rendered as follows:

[PN¹], the messe[nger and PN²], bot[h ...] they killed. [...] they surround[ed? the city? of Arza?] saying: “They were not the people of Dannaya? [who] plundered my sheep, but the people of Arza plundered them”. The king my lord kn[ows that] until the people of [...] attacked me [...].

The translation, if correct, presents a scene typical to the reality of a peripheral region; that is, the insecurity of travelling, the plundering of sheep, and the reality in which each side accuses the other of a crime (the text cites the defence of one side). Danna (if this is the correct rendering of its name) and Arza might have been two neighbouring towns, and the scribe who reported the event described it in detail, mentioned and dismissed the accusation raised against Danna, and accused Arza of committing the crime.

According to the Esarhaddon Chronicle (Grayson 1975: 125 lines 5-7), in the second year of the king (679 BCE), “Arza was captured,

⁸ For an earlier edition, see Saggs 2001: 163-164 and pl. 31.

its booty sacked, the inhabitants plundered, the king and his son were taken prisoners". Thus, evidently, Arza was the seat of a local king and the Assyrians conquered and plundered the city and captured its king and his son.

The inscriptions of Esarhaddon repeatedly mention the conquest of Arza, its plunder, and the deportation of its king. The following are four selected citations:

1. I plundered the city Arza, which is in the district of the Brook of Egypt, and threw Asuhili, its king, into fetters and brought him to Assyria (Leichty 2011: 17-18, lines 39-41).

2. The one who plundered the land of Arza, which is in the district of the Brook of Egypt—I threw Asuhili, its king, into fetters along with his counselors and brought (them) to Assyria (Leichty 2011: 29, lines 57-60).

3. [The people of Arza], whose king Asuhili threw off my yoke, [I threw th]em [into fetters] and [brought] them to Assyria (Leichty 2011: 76, lines 16-17).

4. I conquered [the city of Ar]za, which is in the district of the Brook of Egypt, and [threw Asuhili, its king, toge]ther with his counselors, into fetters and brought him to Assyria, [together with a] heavy [booty]⁹ (Leichty 2011: 77-78, lines 14-rev. 1).

Arza consistently appears as a city, except for one text in which it is presented as a land (No. 2). The city was located in the district of the Brook of Egypt (Naḥal Besor), and the Assyrians conquered and plundered it; took a heavy booty; deported the king, his son and his counselors; and brought them to Assyria. Asuhili is probably an Arabic name (Åkerman 1998), which might indicate that a group of nomads of Arabian origin took possession of the place in the late eighth or early seventh century BCE. The reign of a man of Arabic origin at Arza (Tel Haror) fits the evidence of several Assyrian royal inscriptions that refer to Arabian tribal leaders who lived in the region near the border of Egypt and cooperated with the rulers of the Assyrian empire (Na'aman 2004: 62-64, with earlier literature).

⁹ Leichty restored it "[together with his] heavy [audience gift]". However, Arza was probably conquered and did not send audience gift (*tāmartu*) to Assyria. A better restoration is "[his] heavy [spoil/booty]" (see Luckenbill 1927: 218 §550).

The consequences of Esarhaddon's campaign against Arza should now be evaluated in light of the results of the excavations conducted at the site. Unfortunately, although Tel Haror was excavated in the years 1982-1988, to date only a few preliminary reports have been published (Oren and Morrison 1986;¹⁰ Oren et al. 1991; Oren 1993a). The lack of published archaeological data makes it difficult to date the strata and the findings uncovered at the site and compare them to the archaeological data unearthed at other contemporaneous sites.

According to the preliminary reports, the upper part of the mound was strongly fortified in the second half of the eighth century and a well-planned set of storages was constructed therein. The building operations were probably initiated by the royal house that governed the place, either before the Assyrian conquest of Philistia (734 BCE) or shortly after. According to the archaeological report, at a certain moment this set of fortifications and public buildings was thoroughly renovated. The published reports neither explore the background and context of the renovation nor discuss its date in detail.

Years later, the site was entirely destroyed, and signs of the heavy destruction were detected in all the excavated areas. A poor settlement inherited the flourishing city, which must have lost its status as the strongest site in the region of Wādi esh-Shari'ah.

The excavator dated the heavy destruction to the second half of the seventh century BCE (Oren and Morrison 1986: 75; Oren et al. 1991: 16-18; 1993a: 584). If this timing is correct, we should date the renovation of the site to the period after the 679 BCE Assyrian campaign, and the heavy destruction to the time of the Assyrian withdrawal from the region in about 630 BCE, at the same time as the destruction of phase 5 at Tell Jemmeh (see above). In light of these dates, I suggest that Esarhaddon captured the city, deported the king and his officials, and replaced the deported king by another

¹⁰ Among the finds from the site, Oren and Morrison (1986: 75) mentioned a short inscription in ink that was marked on an intact torpedo-shape jar (see photo of the jar with the inscription on p. 82). To the best of my knowledge, this inscription has never been published. Cross (2003: 155 n. 10) mentioned a second unpublished ostrakon discovered at the site, with the name 'zmlk. Note that an identical name appears on an ostrakon discovered in the nearby site of Tel Sera' (Cross 2003: 157-158).

scion of the royal house. The newly elected king initiated the renovation works, which became necessary following the destructive Assyrian conquest.

Why did Esarhaddon attack and plunder Arza? In my opinion, he did it in an effort to extend the territory of the Assyrian estate that Sargon established at Gerar. The king of Arza possibly opposed the Assyrian efforts to expand their domination over his country, and Esarhaddon acted forcefully, deposed him and his officials, and replaced him with a ruler who was willing to cooperate with the Assyrian authorities. By this power demonstration, he established the Assyrian control over the entire region that bordered with Egypt and extended the Assyrian estate that surrounded the administrative centre of Gerar (Tell Jemmeh).

A second relevant site for the discussion is Tel Sera^c (Tell esh-Shari^cah). Eliezer Oren excavated the site 1972-1979; but to date, about forty years later, no more than a few preliminary reports of the results of the excavations have been published (Oren 1982; 1992: 94-97; 1993b; see also Cross 2003).¹¹

Among the many strata unearthed at the site, only strata VI-IV are relevant for my discussion. Stratum VI (numbered Stratum VII in the earlier publications) comprised of courtyard buildings whose walls were built of bricks covered by ashlar stones. The foundations of some buildings were constructed of blocks of Kurkar, over which the brick walls were erected. The construction of buildings with external ashlar stones is common to Stratum VI at Tel Sera^c and Stratum D4/G4 at Tel Haror, both probably built in the course of the eighth century BCE (Oren 1992).

The next Strata (V-IV [formerly Stratum VI]) at Tel Sera^c are marked by the construction of one large fortress and additional smaller ones, the appearance of many artifacts made in the Assyrian style, and the discovery of some imported Assyrian artifacts (Oren 1982: 159-161; 1993b: 1333-1334). Oren posited that in these years, the Assyrian authorities directly governed Tel Sera^c. Indeed,

¹¹ Note that the numbering of the strata at Tel Sera^c has changed over the time, and it is necessary to fit the enumeration of the early reports to those of the last one (1993b).

there is a marked difference between the material culture unearthed at Tel Sera^c and that uncovered at Tel Haror, which was ruled by its own ruler.

Frank Cross (2003: 157-161) published four inscriptions uncovered at Tel Sera^c, two of them written in the Aramaic script. One of these ostraca registers the distribution of silver to four people who are mentioned along with their parents.¹² Cross (2003: 158-159) observed that Aramaic ostraca are rare in the Coast of Philistia in the Late Iron Age, so that the appearance of the ostraca at Tel Sera^c might indicate the presence of an Assyrian scribe and even deportees of foreign origin.

Like Tel Haror and Tell Jemmeh (phase 5), Tel Sera^c was violently destroyed at the end of Stratum IV. The three sites were probably destroyed at the same time, possibly when the Assyrians retreated from south Philistia in about 630 BCE.

Whereas Tel Haror was the seat of a local royal house, Tel Sera^c was a border town on its easternmost front with Judah. In their efforts to strengthen their control over the region and expand the estate they established at Tell Jemmeh, the Assyrians replaced the king of Arza, set on his throne their own candidate, and took possession of the border town located at Tel Sera^c. They probably sat an Assyrian official to govern the place and directly controlled its internal affairs.

Before closing the discussion of the Assyrian involvement in this region, we must examine Ran Zadok's conjecture (2009: 663-664) that the Assyrians established a second royal estate in the region of Brēr, near Naḥal Shiqma (Wādi el-Hāsi). His suggestion rests on the analysis of an Assyrian legal text, which relates that Abirami, the sister of the Assyrian queen (Naqi'a), received a plot of land in the town of Baruri as a pledge for a loan of half a mina of silver she lent to a man from KUR *Ha-zi-te* (Kwasman and Parpola 1991: 201-202). As Hazite is the Assyrian rendering of the name of Gaza, Zadok suggested identifying Baruri near the village of Brēr, a site located 18 km northeast of Gaza, which might have preserved its name. He further posited that the Assyrian royal house encouraged the development of peripheral regions and arid zones and that the loan of the Assyrian queen's sister to a man of Gaza is in

¹² My interpretation of the ostracon differs from Cross' rendering.

accord with the Assyrian policy. In this light, he postulated that an Assyrian estate was established on the two sides of Naḥal Shiqma, close to the northeastern borders of Gaza and the southeastern border of Ashkelon.

This suggestion, however, faces enormous obstacles. First, the investment of the queen's sister in this remote region, located in the territory of a vassal state, is unparalleled. Why should the Assyrian lady invest money in this remote region rather than in a nearby place, and how could she supervise this far off plot of land? Second, all names that are mentioned securely in the tablet are Akkadian, some typical Assyrian. Even the names of the three witnesses from Baruri are typical Akkadian (Ahu-ereš, Nabû-šarrani and [...]eriba). Moreover, according to Kwasman and Parpola, the name of the borrower ([Amu]r-ilu) is also Akkadian. Such a concentration of people carrying typical Akkadian names is unknown in documents unearthed in the territories of Assyrian vassal kingdoms.¹³ Third, the stamp of the man who ostensibly lived in Gaza appears on the Assyrian tablet. Did he travel all the way from Philistia to Assyria to sign the contract? And did the three men from Baruri travel to Assyria to serve as witnesses to the sealed contract?

In light of these difficulties, we should best assume that this is a case of what Dominique Charpin (2003) called "*La toponymie en miroir*"; that is, identical names of toponyms located in different regions of the ancient Near East. Hazite and Baruri should be sought somewhere in Assyria, in an area whose inhabitants carry Assyrian names and which was accessible to the queen's sister.

Hence, we may conclude that as far as we know, Gerar and its region is the only estate that the Assyrians established in south Philistia.

¹³ Of course, deportees carrying foreign names are known from places located within the annexed Assyrian territories. See Horowitz, Oshima and Sanders 2006: 51-64, 98-99; Zilberg 2015.

The Land of Gerar and the Dating of the Isaac Story

Although it was Tiglath-pileser III who conquered Philistia (734 BCE), it seems that the extensive Assyrian operations in the region of Naḥal Besor began during the time of Sargon II (721-705). The king initiated the construction of the administrative centre at Gerar and settled deportees there. Some of them arrived from the east of the Assyria region (Naʾaman and Zadok 1988; Naʾaman 2004: 57-59; 2016: 277-278). A generation later, Esarhaddon (680-669) conquered the city of Arza, the capital of a local dynasty that governed the Wādi esh-Shariʿah region. He replaced its king and expanded Gerar's estate up to Tel Seraʿ, the easternmost town of the Kingdom of Arza.

I suggest that the Sargonides' extensive operations in the Coast of Philistia changed the history of the region for the many generations to come, and that the formation of the Byzantine estate of Saltus Gerariticus is the latest stage in the development of this region. In his dissertation, Jerome Schaefer (1979: 50-129) discussed the continuity between the Assyrian and Byzantine operations in south Philistia, but identified Yurza/Arza and Orda in the region of Tell Jemmeh. As observed above, Yurza/Arza should be located at Tel Haror and Orda—the civil and ecclesiastic centre of the region—was located at Khirbet ʿIrq. Thus, evidently, at a certain historical moment, possibly after the Assyrian withdrawal from Philistia, Arza/Orda, the former seat of a local king, restored its former position and replaced Gerar as the centre of the estate.

The identification of Gerar at Tell Jemmeh, the expansion of the estate in the area between Naḥal Besor and Wādi esh-Shariʿah, and the decisive role of Assyria in the formation of the estate jointly comprise important keys for establishing the historical and social background of Isaac's story in Genesis 26. According to the story, at the time Gerar was the main urban centre in the region of Naḥal Besor. The plot developed along the course of the *naḥal*, between Gerar in the west and Beer-sheba in the east. The narrator even relates where the territory of Philistia ends and that of Judah begins (west of Rehoboth). Both the free movement from Judah to Philistia and back along Naḥal Gerar and the attainment of a treaty

between Abimelech and Isaac (each representing his own country) correspond well with the reality of the *pax Assyriaca*, when Assyria governed the entire land and dictated the internal state of affairs. Thus, clearly, the narrator was well acquainted with the environment he described and the social conditions in this region. Hence, although the story is wholly legendary, its author gave it a sense of reality.

The above analysis of the historical background of the story raises the question: When might it have been composed in writing? I suggest that the *terminus post quem* for the story is the reign of Esarhaddon, who consolidated the estate of Gerar and the place of the centre of Gerar in it. Establishing a *terminus ante quem* for the story depends on my interpretation of Gen 21:34 and 26:1, 8 according to which Abimelech is presented as King of Gaza, whereas Gerar was a peripheral city in his kingdom (see above).¹⁴ A list of Philistine and Phoenician kingdoms—including Gaza, which was included in a broken prism written in Nebuchadnezzar II's seventh year (598 BCE)—is the latest text in which Gaza appears as a kingdom (for the prism, see Unger 1931: 286, lines 23-29; Da Riva 2013: 201, 204). Later, at an unknown date, Gaza was annexed, probably by the Babylonians. Under the Persian Empire, it was included within the Arabian territory of northern Sinai (Na'aman 2004: 59-60, 65-67). Thus, the early sixth century BCE is the latest possible date of the story's composition.

In light of the above considerations, I tentatively suggest dating the story's composition to the second half of Manasseh's reign, at a moment later than Esarhaddon's arrangements in the region, when the Assyrian estate of Gerar flourished and attracted pastoral groups to move there and enjoy the economic prosperity in this region. The Isaac story must have emerged at Beer-sheba and his figure probably venerated in the local sanctuary.¹⁵ I assume that the story originally emerged as an oral story, was later composed

¹⁴ Hanunu and Šilli-Bēl are the only kings of Gaza whose names are mentioned in the Assyrian royal inscriptions. It is thus impossible to establish whether Abimelech actually reigned in Gaza or his name is a literary creation of the narrator.

¹⁵ The connection of Isaac to the sanctuary of Beer-sheba was recognized since the early stages of modern biblical research. See von Gall 1898: 44-51; Zimmerli 1932: 15-24, with earlier literature.

in writing, and finally reworked when combined with the Abraham and Jacob story-cycles.

Summing up the discussion, I suggest that the identification of Gerar at Tell Jemmeh and the elucidation of the Assyrian operations on the empire's border with Egypt are the keys for the interpretation and dating of the original Isaac story. The story reflects the time of the establishment of Gerar as centre of an Assyrian estate that developed in the Naḥal Besor region. Although the story is wholly legendary, it still reflects the political and social reality of the time in which it was composed; that is, the mid-seventh century BCE, when the *pax Assyriaca* was in its height, the Negeb prospered, and peaceful relations were maintained between the kingdoms and pastoral groups that lived in this peripheral region.

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Egyptian Iconography and the Battle with Amalek (Exodus 17:8-16) Revisited

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Abstract. *This article argues that the enigmatic scene of Moses' raised hands supported by Aaron and Hur, the central scene of the battle with Amalek (Ex 17.8-16), has been formulated under the influence of Egyptian iconography. By combining popular, canonical iconographic motifs, the biblical author depicts Moses as one equivalent to the Pharaoh or an Egyptian god. The biblical account reflects an influence from the Diaspora in Egypt and represents a pro-Egyptian voice.*

Résumé. *Cet article propose que la scène centrale de la bataille avec Amalec (Ex 17,8-16) au cours de laquelle les mains levées de Moïse sont soutenues par Aaron et Hour est influencée par l'iconographie égyptienne. En combinant des motifs iconographiques populaires et canoniques, l'auteur de la Bible présente Moïse comme équivalent du pharaon ou d'un dieu égyptien. Le récit biblique reflète l'influence de la diaspora égyptienne et se révèle pro-égyptien.*

1. Introduction¹

The account of the battle with Amalek in Ex 17.8-13 has long been regarded as one of the most puzzling passages in the Book of Exodus. The account contains a number of unique features that distinguish it from other wilderness narratives. Joshua, for instance, ap-

¹ This essay is a revision of the paper presented at the "Egyptology and Ancient Israel" section of the 2016 SBL Annual Meeting, San Antonio. In writing this article, I am deeply indebted to Guiseppina Lenzo and Agnes Klische for their knowledge of the Egyptian sources and ideology. I also appreciate Silvia Schroer for valuable comments. All the possible misinterpretations of the Egyptian sources, however, are my responsibility.

pears unexpectedly as a military leader (v. 10, 13); Hur is introduced abruptly as one of the two assistants of Moses for the first time in the Bible (v. 10); Moses organizes an *ad hoc* army selected from the people (v. 9); the Israelites go into the battle without fear (cf. Ex 13.18; Num 13.1-3); Israel's victory is dependent upon Moses' performative action of raising his hands (v. 11), without an explicit mention of divine intervention; and Moses builds a memorial altar at the end of the episode (v. 15). Houtman, therefore, rightly observes that the present account has "no particular connection with the preceding account."² Van Seters similarly claims that the account is "isolated within its context" and "quite a different story from the previous murmuring stories in Ex 15.22-17.7 and shares few features with them."³

Among these unique features, what has baffled the critics most of all is the unusual scene in which Moses' raised hands strengthen the Israelite army. Our account relates that Israel had the upper hand in the battle as long as Moses' hands were raised; when his hands were lowered, Amalek's army prevailed (v. 11). In order to guarantee their victory, therefore, Aaron and Hur seated weary Moses on a rock and supported Moses' two hands, one on each side, until sunset. As a result, Joshua was able to eventually defeat (literarily "weaken" [וַיַּחֲלֹשׁ]) Amalek. At least on the surface level of the account, the military might of the Israelites is solely dependent upon the physical location of Moses' two hands. In other Pentateuchal miracle accounts, the physical actions of Moses or Aaron are strictly under the control of YHWH. For instance, their actions such as stretching out their hands or staffs (e.g. Ex 8.1; 10.21), throwing staffs (Ex 7.9) or ashes (Ex 9.8), smiting a rock with a staff

² See C. Houtman, *Exodus, Historical Commentary on the Old Testament*, Volume 2, Chapters 7:14-19:25, Kampen, KOK Publishing House, 1996, p. 373.

³ J. Van Seters, *The Life of Moses. The Yahwist as Historian in Exodus-Numbers*, Louisville-Kampen, Westminster-Koks, 1994, 198f. Coats observes further that the episode fails to make use of basic motifs from the wilderness traditions. See J. W. Coats, « Moses versus Amalek: Aetiology and Legend in Ex 17, 8-16 », in *Congress Volume Edinburgh 1974*, SVT 28, Leiden, Brill, 1975, p. 29-41, esp. p. 29. See also H. Valentin, *Aaron: Eine Studie Zur Vorpriesterlichen Aaron-Überlieferung*, OBO 18, Freiburg-Göttingen, Universitätsverlag-Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978, 145f.

(Ex 17.6; Num 20.8, 11⁴) are commanded by YHWH and used merely as tools for His miracle. In other cases, Moses' verbal actions such as prayer or intermediary petition initiate the divine interventions, in which YHWH remains the performer of the miracles. In the present account, however, Moses neither requests YHWH's help verbally, nor is commanded by YHWH to do such an action. YHWH is not even mentioned in the main plot of the narrative (vv. 8-13), appearing only in a sort of postscript after the main narrative (vv. 14, 16).

While traditional Jewish and Christian interpreters viewed Moses' action as an act of prayer,⁵ a number of modern critics have interpreted this motif as a performance of magic that originated from old material that depicts Moses as a magician.⁶ Again, some recent studies regard Moses' action as prayer, dating the composition of the account to the exilic or the Persian period and assume a Deuteronomistic nature or influence on our account.⁷ However, a solution from a completely different direction has been proposed by Othmar Keel. Still maintaining the ancient origin of the motif, Keel endeavored to find the motif in Egyptian iconography. The scene of Moses' raising his hands is neither a description of dynamic action nor a discourse that delivers an explicit theological

⁴ The episode of Kadesh-Meribah is a priestly re-writing of the non-priestly episode of Massah and Meribah (Ex 17.1-7), in which smiting the rock with a staff is the core motif. The command "Speak to the rock" (וּדְבַרְתֶּם אֶל הַסֵּלֶעַ) in Num 20.8 should be regarded as a later emendation. See further B. Levine, *Numbers 1-20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 4, New York, Doubleday, 1993, p. 490; D. Frankel, *The Murmuring Stories of the Priestly School: A Retrieval of Ancient Sacerdotal Lore*, SVT 89, Leiden, Brill, 2002, p. 263-311; R. E. Garton, *Mirages in the Desert: The Tradition-Historical Developments of the Story of Massah-Meribah*, BZAW 492, Berlin, de Gruyter, 2017, p. 202-218. Cf. R. Achenbach, *Die Vollendung Der Tora: Studien Zur Redaktionsgeschichte Des Numeribuches Im Kontext von Hexateuch und Pentateuch*, BZABR 3, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2003, p. 302-317; C. Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch: A Study in the Composition of the Book of Leviticus*, FAT II/25, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2007, p. 26-30.

⁵ For a further explication, see B. S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, London, OTL, 1974, 316f.

⁶ See, e.g., Childs, *Exodus*, p. 315; M. Noth, *Exodus*, London, OTL, 1962, p. 142.

⁷ See below, n. 60-64.

notion.⁸ Rather, this scene describes a stabilized pictorial image that may correctly be compared to iconographic images. Keel's thesis has gained some support, yet, I believe, his approach has the further potential to pave a way for considering our text in terms of Egyptian influence. This paper examines this possibility in the Persian-period context. In the following, therefore, Keel's thesis first will be critically evaluated, then further influences from Egyptian iconography will be investigated. The iconographic influence will then be interpreted in the socio-historical contexts of the Persian Yehud and Egyptian Diaspora.

2. Critical examination of Keel's thesis

In his work published in 1974 (also in 1999), Keel suggested that the present account has been influenced by Egyptian iconographic images such as the one found in the Valley of the Kings (figure 1). In this image, Tut-ankh-Amun is smiting an enemy with a mace or sickle-sword and, according to Keel, "the queen Ankhs-en-Amun stands behind him with her hand raised in a gesture of blessing and protection."⁹ Keel points out examples of similar images from a rock stele of Amenemopet, a viceroy of Kush under Sthos I, as well as the scarabs found in southern Judah such as Tel Masos and Tel el-Farah (Figure 2).¹⁰ The Judean scarabs are from the 20th (1190-1075 BCE) and 21st (1075-945 BCE) Dynasties, which are, according to Keel, approximately the period of historical conflict between proto-Israelite groups and the Amalekites.¹¹ Keel, therefore, concludes that the account of Ex 17.8-13 has been formulated in the pre-monarchical period inspired by those iconographic images.¹²

⁸ See, e.g., Valentin, Aaron, p. 175-177.

⁹ See O. Keel, *Wirkmächtige Siegeszeichen Im Alten Testament: Ikonographische Studien Zu Jos 8,12-26; Ex 17,8-13; 2 Kön 13,4-19 Und I Kön 22,11*, OBO 5, Göttingen, Universitätsverlag-Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974, p. 90-109; idem, « Powerful symbols of victory – The parts stay the same, the actors change », *JNSL* 25, 1999, p. 205-240, esp. p. 214.

¹⁰ See also Figures 10-15 in Keel, « Powerful symbols », 236f.

¹¹ See *ibid.*, p. 216.

¹² See *ibid.*

Keel's thesis has been supported by a number of critics, notably H. Valentin, M. Rose, S. Kang, and, in part, Van Seters.¹³



Figure 1. Tut-ankh-Amun and the queen Ankhs-en-Amun (the Valley of Kings). The image is from Keel, « Powerful symbols », p. 205-240 (figure 10, p. 236).



Figure 2. Scarabs from Tel el-Farah South and Beer-Sheba (from the left). The images are from Keel, « Powerful symbols », figure 11.

I would agree that the iconographic image of the raised hand with a mace or sickle-sword, as Keel argues, bears much similarity to the triumphant image of Joshua in the account of the battle of Ai (esp.

¹³ Valentin, Aaron, p. 162; M. Rose, *Deuteronomist Und Jahwist: Untersuchungen Zu Den Berührungspunkten Beider Literaturwerke*, ATANT 67, Zürich, Theologischer Verlag, 1981, p. 260, n. 15; S.-M. Kang, *Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient near East*, BZAW 177, Berlin, de Gruyter, 1989, p. 125-127; Van Seters, Moses, p. 202-207. Cf. A. Scharf, *Mose und Israel Im Konflikt: eine Redaktionsgeschichtliche Studie zu den Wüstenerzählungen*, OBO 98, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990, p. 188, n. 9.

Josh 8.18, 26).¹⁴ Nevertheless, Keel's comparison between the iconographic image and Ex 17.8-13 is not without problems. First of all, the central figure in Keel's examples is the "triumphant Pharaoh," who is the equivalent of Joshua in our biblical account. The huge size of the king in the scarabs, compared to the relatively small praying figure behind the king, obviously indicates that the former is the central figure in the image.¹⁵ In Ex 17, however, the hero is Moses rather than Joshua. In the central scene of the narrative (v. 12b), Moses is sitting on a rock with his raised hands supported by Aaron and Hur. The preceding verses (vv. 10-12a) gradually prepare this climactic scene of the narrative (v. 12b). For instance, v. 10b introduces Aaron and Hur; v. 11 explains that Moses' hand should be raised for Israel to prevail in the battle; also, the flow of narrative is significantly slowed down in v. 12a to describe in detail Moses sitting on the rock. This is a typical narrative technique in the Hebrew Bible that prepares for and highlights the climax of the narrative. Joshua, on the contrary, is mentioned only at the beginning and the end of the main narrative with general descriptions such as *להלחם* (fought; v.10) and *ויחלש* (weaken; v. 13, cf. v. 9). YHWH commands Moses to read the record of the battle to Joshua at the end of the episode (v. 14), yet Joshua does not confront Amalek afterwards in the Hexateuch. This verse bears a strong Deuteronomistic imprint and should be understood in connection with Deut 25.17-19 and 1Sam 15 (esp. vv. 2f.) rather than the Book of Joshua or Joshua himself. Joshua is thus not depicted as the central figure in our account.

Another issue to be discussed is Keel's example of the raised hands. In Keel's examples, the protector (goddess) raises only one hand while the other hand is lowered. In our biblical account, however, Moses raises both hands. So, Keel's argument would be more persuasive if one or two raised hands were interchangeable. In

¹⁴ See Keel, « Powerful symbols », p. 211. See also Van Seters, *Moses*, p. 202-207; A. Scharf, *Mose und Israel*, p. 188, n. 9.

¹⁵ For the significance of the differences in size between central and peripheral figures in Egyptian art, see E. H. Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, London, Phaidon Publishers, 1956, p. 38.

Egyptian iconography, however, the two shapes often bear two different sets of meanings. Often, one hand raised (stretched) toward a king or god indicates blessing, support, or protection, as Keel points out; yet the motif of two hands raised (stretched) toward a king or god usually signifies adoration or prayer.¹⁶ The latter form is used as a hieroglyph, according to R. H. Wilkinson, that is “a determinative in such words as *iau*: ‘praise,’ *dua*: ‘adore,’ *suash*: ‘extol,’ and *ter*: ‘to show respect,’ so the gesture’s range of meaning is perfectly clear to us.”¹⁷ The difference between the two shapes clearly manifests itself in Figure 3, a wall painting from the coffin chamber in the tomb of Sennefer (TT 96 b: Thebes-West (Upper Egypt) Shaikh Abd al-Qurna) built in the 18th Dynasty. In the drawing, Sennefer and his wife Merit are depicted standing before Osiris, worshipping or adoring him with their two hands raised forward toward him. From behind Osiris, Anubis blesses the former with only one hand raised.

¹⁶ There are numerous examples for this gesture. See, e.g., the image of the dead who is worshipping Anubis in Book of the Dead (Neferrhenpet). See also the examples in R. H. Wilkinson, *Reading Egyptian Art: A Hieroglyphic Guide to Ancient Egyptian Painting and Sculpture*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1992, p. 28.

¹⁷ See further, R. H. Wilkinson, *Reading Egyptian Art*, p. 29. For the other meaning of the raised hands, see below in the subsection entitled “Up-raised hands.”



Figure 3. From the coffin chamber in the tomb of Sennefer (TT 96 b: Thebes-West, Shaikh Abd al-Qurna).

Furthermore, the hand stretched forward in Keel's examples is different from our biblical description of Moses' up-raised two hands. When the Hebrew Bible describes (a) hand(s) stretched forward, it uses the expression *יד + נטה* (Ex 7.5, 19; 8.2; 10.2, etc.),¹⁸ which is distinguished from raising (a) hand(s) upward *רום (Hiph) + יד* (e.g. Gen 14.22; Exod 17.11; Num 20.11; Micah 5.8). The expression *יד + נטה* is often used in the Hebrew Bible for signifying divine punishment or curse rather than blessing (e.g. Jer 6.12; Ezek 25.13, 16; Zeph 2.13); the up-raised hand(s) may symbolize a revolt (1Kgs 11.26f.) or a victory in battle (Micah 5.8). In our account, Moses raises his hand upward (*יורם משה ידו*, v. 11a), but does not stretch it forward. In Egyptian iconography, as will be discussed shortly, the upraised hands convey a quite different meaning from the hand or hands stretched forward.

¹⁸ When the expression *יד + נטה* followed by *יד* describes stretching hands upward, it is accompanied by an indication of direction such as *על השמים* (Ex 9.22).

3. Core motifs in Ex 17

The weaknesses of Keel's thesis, as well as his important insight on the influence of Egyptian iconography, lead us to a further comparison between our account and different sets of elements in Egyptian iconography. The useful comparison may be found not in one specific iconographic image or motif but in combinations of different iconographic motifs. W. Davis maintains that Egyptian canonical iconographic programs may expand and contract, but "the core motifs invariably appear in every context of use in a highly invariant form."¹⁹ Different core elements can be combined through additive modification, according to Davis, and this "is the most common source of iconographic variability and flexibility in Egyptian art and was probably the most stable of the canonical iconographic principles."²⁰ Similarly, N. Billing claims that "in certain cases one can likewise notice how two or more such core motifs have been fused in a specific iconographic realization."²¹ It is, therefore, plausible that, in our biblical account too, multiple core iconographic motifs have been combined. The combinations of the canonical core motifs, however, may not necessarily occur only in art, but also could possibly happen in scribes' pictorial imaginations if the scribes are familiar with those core motifs. Whatever the form of expression, either as a pictorial image or a written description, the internal processes of combining those core elements in one's mind are not much different from each other and can even be considered to be interchangeable. For instance, as we will see below, the Egyptian creation myth could be expressed in pictorial images, in texts, or in both together. In the following, I will endeavor to detect the core iconographic motifs from the central scene of our account in v. 12b and connect them to possible Egyptian parallels.

¹⁹ See W. Davis, *The Canonical Tradition in Ancient Egyptian Art*, Cambridge Studies in New Art History and Criticism, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 64. See also E. H. Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, 41f.

²⁰ See *ibid.*

²¹ See N. Billing, « The Secret One: An analysis of a core motif in the Books of the Netherworld », *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 34, 2006, p. 51-71, esp. p. 51.

The divine triad

Firstly, the most prominent core motif in Ex 17.12b is that of the three figures in one scene, with the hero in the middle supported by two other figures, one on each side. The motif of triad, two figures one on each side supporting or holding the one in the middle, is virtually omnipresent in ancient Egyptian art. According to Wilkinson, “many divine families which Egyptian theology constructed of a god, his wife, and their child” appear in this form, and “sometimes distinctly disparate deities were brought together to construct such groups.”²² Especially the divine families such as Osiris, Isis, and Horus, the Theban triad of Amun, Mut and Khonsu in New Kingdom, and also Ptah, Sakhmet, and Nefertem in Memphis may be the primary examples.²³

In some other cases, the Pharaoh is portrayed as the hero in the middle. In the temple relief of Mentuhotep III, Pharaoh is depicted with Montu and Junit on each side.²⁴ In the wall painting from the Valley of the Kings (KV 16), also Horus and Anubis are holding the hands of Ramesses I in the middle, blessing him with one raised hand from each side (19th Dynasty). Similarly, the carving from the temple of Hathor and Nefertari in Abu Simbel bears a similar motif in which Ramesses II in the middle is blessed by Horus and Seth (19th Dynasty). Also, in a much later period, during the reign of Darius of Persia, a similar motif is found in the Hibis Temple. A wall drawing from there shows an identical motif in which the king in the middle is blessed by Amun and Montu on each side of him and given life through his nostrils. Another wall painting from Hibis Temple also contains the core motif of Pharaoh supported by Horus and Thot.

The motif of divine or royal-divine triad, or sometimes simply a triad, is found in Israel, too. The scarabs and amulets from the

²² See R. H. Wilkinson, *Symbol & Magic in Egyptian Art*, New York, Thames & Hudson, 1994, p. 94.

²³ See *ibid.*

²⁴ See Figure 321 in S. Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels und der Alte Orient: eine Religionsgeschichte in Bildern. Band 2: Die Mittlebronzzeit*, Fribourg, Academic Press Fribourg, 2008, p. 117.

period of the 19th–20th Dynasties found at Tel el-Farah South, located 14 km south of Gaza, prove that the motif was widespread in this area. In some artifacts, for instance, the King in the middle is accompanied by Amun and a falcon-headed god holding his two hands;²⁵ while some other amulet plates depict Amun in the middle with two falcon-headed gods who are holding the two hands of Amun.²⁶ The triad motif is found also on the scarabs from a later period. In Figure 4-1, on the back of a scarab found in Gezer from the period of the 22nd Dynasty (945–713 BCE), three figures are depicted holding each other's shoulders.²⁷ Figure 4-2 exhibits a similar triad with two up-raised hands of the figure in the middle who is supported on each side. This image provides almost a perfect parallel of our biblical scene except that the central figure is standing rather than sitting on a rock/throne. Silvia Schroer, in her publication, categorizes this image as a scene of dancing,²⁸ yet she admits that this image with three figures may belong to a tradition other than dancing.²⁹ I will return to this image shortly. The motif of a group of three is often found in various sites both in the north and south, including Jerusalem, Lachisch, Megiddo, Tel Rehov, Arad, Bet-Schemesch.³⁰

²⁵ See Figures 11 and 12 in O. Keel, *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel. Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit. Katalog Band III: Von Tell el-Far'a Nord bis Tell el-Fir*, OBO.SA 31, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010, p. 457, 567.

²⁶ See Figures 13 and 14 in Keel, *Corpus III*, p. 237, 658.

²⁷ See O. Keel, *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel. Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit. Katalog Band IV: Von Tel Gamma bis Chirbet Husche*, OBO.SA 33, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013, p. 292.

²⁸ See S. Schroer and O. Keel. *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels und der Alte Orient: eine Religionsgeschichte in Bildern. Band IV*, Bern, Swabeverlag, 2005, p. 328.

²⁹ In a personal communication with Silvia Schroer.

³⁰ For the historical classification of these Bone seals, see O. Keel and C. Uehlinger, *Göttinnen, Götter und Gottessymbole: neue Erkenntnisse zur Religionsgeschichte Kanaans und Israels aufgrund bislang unerschlossener ikonographischer Quellen*, Saint Pauls, London, 2010, p. 302-309.



Figure 4-1. A scarab from Gezer from the 22nd Dynasty. The image is from O. Keel, *Corpus IV* (figure 292, p. 297).



Figure 4-2. A scarab from Tel el-Fār'a south. The image is from S. Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels und der Alte Orient: eine Religionsgeschichte in Bildern. Band IV.* (Bern: Schwabeverlag, 2018; figure 1266, p. 329)

A hero sitting on a throne

Another iconographic element in our biblical text is Moses sitting on a rock (v. 12aβ) that is later designated as the throne of YHWH (כס יה) in v. 16.³¹ In ancient Egyptian art, the motif of sitting on a throne represents someone to whom reverence is shown, so that usually a king or a deity appears in this position. Especially the motif of a hero sitting on a throne accompanied by two other figures (also often deities), one on either side, is a very popular motif in Egyptian iconography. For instance, in a wall drawing from the Valley of the Kings (KV 57), Osiris is sitting on his throne and Anubis and Horus are standing behind him. The location of the two deities is a two-dimensional expression of the two sides of Osiris. Also, a wall painting in the Temple of Abidos (19th Dynasty) depicts the

³¹ כס יה is rendered as a throne by ancient translations such as SamP and the Targums of Onkelos, Pseudo-Jonathan, and Neofiti I (cf. LXX) as well as by medieval Jewish commentators. For the survey of the discussion, see Childs, *Exodus*, p. 311. The term כס is often thought to be connected to נס in v. 15, yet some modern commentators also support the rendering of throne. See, e.g., Noth, *Exodus*, p. 143; Houtman, *Exodus*, 390f.

coronation of Seti I, in which the king is sitting on his throne and two female deities, Nekhbe and Wadjet, who are also sitting on thrones, support him by holding his arms. A wall drawing from Hibis Temple from the Persian period (figure 5) further emphasizes Pharaoh seated on his raised throne, accompanied by Horus and Thot.³² This pictorial image is marked by a combination of two core motifs, i.e. the triad and sitting on a throne.

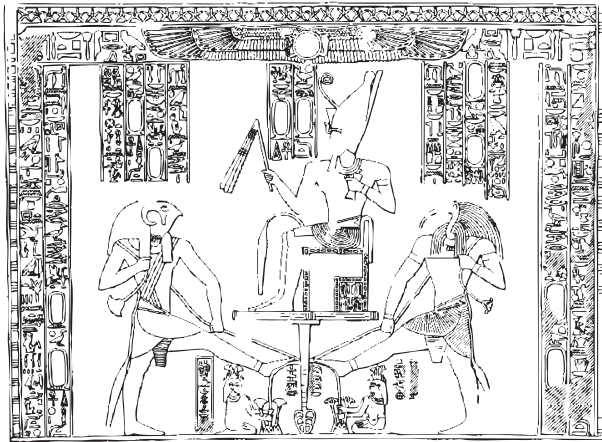


Figure 5. Pharaoh, Horus, and Thot (Hibis Temple). The image is from N. G. Davies, *The Temple of Hibis*, plate 26.

Hur

As observed above, the triad motif in Egyptian iconography often includes Horus as one of the two supporters. In those images (also often sculptures), the hero in the middle may alternate between Osiris and the Pharaoh and the deity on one side may alternate between Anubis and Thot, although Horus always holds his position next to the central figure. Horus is one of the most frequently appearing figures in the triad-deity motif. The popularity of Horus in

³² Garis Davies interprets this painting as Horus and Thot signifying that the north and south are united under the rule of Pharaoh. See N. G. Davies, *The Temple of Hibis in El Khargeh Oasis: Part III, The Decoration*, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1953, p. 22.

the triad motif is illuminative for our understanding of the sudden appearance of Hur in our biblical account. In our account, Aaron and Hur support Moses' two hands, one on either side of Moses. It is noteworthy that the Egyptian pronunciation of Horus is *hor* or *hur*, and it is generally accepted that biblical Hur is an Egyptian name that came from Horus.³³ In our biblical scene, therefore, three figures with the Egyptian names of Moses, Aaron, and Hur (Horus) appear together as a triad, in which the central figure (Moses) is supported by a figure named Horus (Hur) on one side. This biblical scene inevitably reminds us of the popular iconographic themes seen above, enhancing the impression of the influence of Egyptian iconography on Hebrew Scripture.

Hur is never mentioned in the previous text of Exodus or wilderness narratives. In our account, he appears for the first time rather abruptly without any introduction. Hur is among the major figures, whose role is equivalent to that of Aaron. Other figures in the account, however—Moses, Aaron, and Joshua—are the most well-known characters in the Hexateuchal narratives. Considering this, Hur's unexpected appearance with these major characters is certainly strange.

In the Priestly text, Hur is mentioned as Bezalel's grandfather (Ex 38.22); however, in non-P texts, Hur appears only in the present account and in Ex 24.14, which is an editorial passage closely connected to our account.³⁴ In Ex 24.14, as in the present account, Hur is mentioned in terms of leadership, together with Aaron, supporting Moses; yet the former disappears in the following account of the Golden Calf (Ex 32). Hur is not embedded in that story, but is actually a later addition.³⁵ He is, nevertheless, an integral part of

³³ See J. Jeon, « Hur », in *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception (EBR)*, Vol. 12, C. Helmer, S. L. McKenzie, T. C. Römer, J. Schröter, B. D. Walfish and E. Ziolkowski (eds), Berlin, de Gruyter, 2016, p. 599-601.

³⁴ See, e.g., E. Blum, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch*, BZAW 189, Berlin, de Gruyter, 1990, p. 152; J. Jeon, « The Elders Redaction (ER) », in *Who Wrote the Pentateuch?*, Ancient Israel and its Literature Series, J. Jeon (ed.), Atlanta, SBL Press, 2018.

³⁵ See further, Noth, *Exodus*, p. 200; R. Achenbach, « The story of the Revelation at the Mountain of God and the redactional editions of the Hexateuch and the Pentateuch », in *A Critical Study of the Pentateuch. An Encounter Between Europe and*

the present account, and, therefore, most likely an *ad-hoc* figure specially created for our account as an equivalent of the Egyptian Horus in the iconographic motif of the triad.

Up-raised hands

Another core motif of our account is Moses' raised hands. We briefly discussed above that Moses' hands are raised upward rather than stretched forward. In ancient Egyptian art, up-raised hands have various meanings: honor, rejoicing, protection, or a ritual performance, mainly related to the expression of positive emotions or states, or of sacred power.³⁶ As may be observed on the carving from "Chappelle Rouge" in Karnak (18th Dynasty; figure 6), Hatshepsut is consecrating four "meret" boxes with her up-raised hands. She is holding in her right hand the Shekhem scepter that symbolizes power and control, so that the scene may be interpreted as a depiction of a consecration ritual performed with her sacred power and authority. Also, a wall carving at the Temple of Amun (Karnak, 20th Dynasty) describes the royal investiture of the high priest Amenhotep by Ramses IX. In the carving, Amenhotep raises his two hands upward before Ramses IX, which signifies an honor. In a secular context, the motif of up-raised hand is used express rejoicing in a victory celebration, as is found in an illustration from the Temple of Ramses from the 20th Dynasty.³⁷ The motif of raised hands was widespread in Israel, too. The scarab from Gezer from the period of the 22nd Dynasty (Figure 7) shows the main figure raising his two hands, while his right arm is supported by another figure.³⁸ Here we find a combination of the two core motifs,

Africa, Altes Testament und Moderne 20, E. Otto and J. Le Roux (eds), Münster, Lit Verlag, 2005, p. 126-151, esp. 136f.

³⁶ See further Wilkinson, *Reading Egyptian Art*, p. 27.

³⁷ See *ibid.*

³⁸ See further Keel, *Corpus IV*, p. 452.

i.e. raising two hands and another figure supporting the raised arms. Similar motifs are found also in Megiddo and Arad.³⁹



Figure 6. Hatshepsut consecrating four “meret” boxes, “Chapelle Rouge” Karnak Block Nr. 303. The image is from R. A. Fazzini, *Egypt, Dynasty xxii-xxv, Iconography of Religions* Section XVI, Leiden, Brill, 1997 (Egypt plate X).

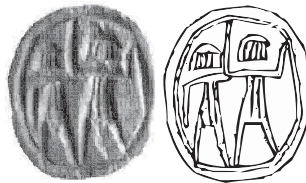


Figure 7. Bone-seal, Gezer, 22nd Dynasty. The image is from O. Keel, *Corpus IV* (figure 666, p. 453).

Among many examples, the most significant representation of this core motif may be the depiction of the Egyptian creation myth. In figure 8 (late 21st-early 22nd Dynasty), Shu, the god of air, is depicted supporting the Sky goddess Nut with two up-raised hands, and the two ram-headed gods (Khnum) are supporting Shu's two arms. This motif was one of the most popular types of imagery in ancient Egyptian art throughout its history. Again, in figure 8, the ram-headed Khnum apparently supports Shu's two arms physically from each side in order to firmly maintain the arms' up-raised

³⁹ See O. Keel (ed.), *Die Geschichte Jerusalems und die Entstehung des Monotheismus*, Orte und Landschaften der Bibel Bd. 4, 1, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007, p. 341-344; O. Keel and C. Uehlinger, *Göttinnen, Götter und Gottessymbole*, p. 302-309 (Abb. 265a-272d).

position, preventing the arms from being lowered—in Egyptian cosmology, the (sexual) re-union of Shu and Geb means the end of the world. The motif of supporting Shu’s arms has probably been added to the original core motif of Shu’s holding up Nut,⁴⁰ influenced by the idea that Shu is weary of lifting the sky (Nut) and, therefore, he needs physical support. Such an idea had already begun to appear in the *Coffin Text* in the Middle Kingdom, especially (CT 76). The text reads:⁴¹

Give me your arms, tie together a ladder for me. (5-6)
For I am weary at the uplifting of Shu, since I lifted my daughter Nut
atop me. (10-11)

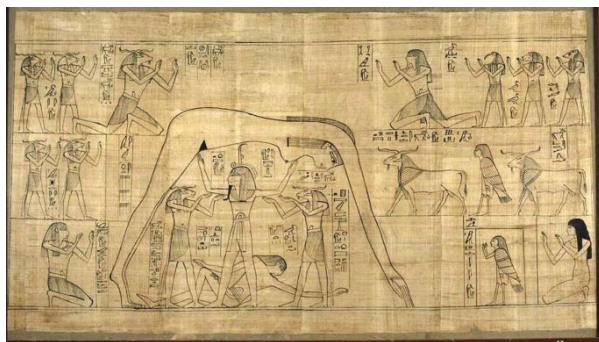


Figure 8. Papyrus Greenfield (British Museum) sheet 87. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

The motif of the weary raised hands and their physical support is almost identical to that of our biblical account. Exod 17.12aα explicitly says that Moses’ hands grew weary so that Aaron and Hur physically support Moses’ hands to firmly maintain the hands’ position.

⁴⁰ Often Shu, Geb, and Nut are depicted without the minor deities who support Shu’s two arms.

⁴¹ The translation follows J. P. Allen, *Genesis in Egypt: The Philosophy of Ancient Egyptian Creation Accounts*, Yale Egyptological studies 2, New Haven, Yale Egyptological Seminar, 1988, p. 18.

The creation myth has been recorded since the Old Kingdom (*Pyramid Text*) and was reproduced throughout the history of ancient Egypt until the Roman period.⁴² For our concern, at least four coffin lids were found depicting Shu uplifting Nut, dated to the 26th Dynasty (660-520 BCE), and one coffin, dated to the 30th Dynasty (380-340 BCE) had the identical image.⁴³ Another major source of the preservation of the uplifting motif was probably the Book of the Dead that had been reproduced and circulated throughout the history of Ancient Egypt. Spells 17,7; 17,96; 17,214; 109,9 in the Book refer to Shu's uplifting of Nut, which enables the Sun god to travel across the sky by day.

Nevertheless, the heroes in the myth and their iconographic presentations were fluid both in terms of the figures and their context. In *CT II* 76, 80, for instance, it is the god Heh who stands next to Shu, helping him to support the goddess Nut. Further, these texts do not necessarily describe a cosmological scene. One may observe an increased fluidity, especially in the Persian and Hellenistic periods. The above-mentioned coffin lid from the 30th Dynasty shows the god Bes, instead of Shu, uplifting Nut. Also, the so-called *twA-pt*-scene depicted on the walls of late temples in Esna or Edfu exhibits the king uplifting the sky-hieroglyph in front of a god—thus the king stands in the same position as Shu. A wall inscription from Edfu describes a creator god Ptah, instead of Shu, as separating heaven and earth.⁴⁴ Such fluidity of this motif indicates that the motif was diversely adapted in different contexts with different heroes, particularly in the late period. This fact again indicates that the Biblical adaptation of this motif, with different heroes—Moses, Aaron, and Hur—was probably one of those diverse adaptations.

The fact that the creation myth and its iconographic presentations were widespread also during the Persian period allows us to assume that the diaspora Judahites in Egypt could have had contact with the present motif, especially as the ram-headed creator-god

⁴² Different versions of the myth were circulated up to the Roman period, one of which is mentioned by Plutarch in his book *Iside et Osiride*.

⁴³ In personal communications with Agnes Klische.

⁴⁴ See Quelle 117-118 in D. Kurth, *Wo Götter, Menschen und Tote lebten: Eine Studie zum Weltbild der Alten Ägypter*, QUIA Bd 3, Hützel, Backe-Verlag, 2016, p. 70-72.

Khnum, who often appears supporting Shu's two hands, was the main god of Esna and Elephantine. Elephantine is a well-known site of a Judahite mercenary community as well as their temple during the 5th century BCE. The Judahite community's contact with the nearby Khnum temple and its worshipers is well documented, although the relationship turned out to be negative (e.g. TAD A4.7). It would be unlikely that the Egyptian creation myth was not told in the temple of Khnum among its worshipers, especially when the deity is a part of the myth as a creator-god. This situation thus supports the idea that at least the Judahites in Elephantine were familiar with the myth and the motif of uplifted hands offering support from each side. The Elephantine case is one example of the Egyptian diaspora Judahites' contact with the Egyptian creation myth in which a hero's uplifted hands are the major motif. To be sure, our biblical scene is of a battle rather than of a creation. Nevertheless, fighting against enemies in ancient times is often a fight against chaos and has cosmological dimensions.⁴⁵

4. The staff of God

We have discussed so far the core motifs combined in the central scene depicted in Ex 17.12. There is, however, another significant core motif found in the early part of our narrative, which is the staff of God (מטה האלהים). The staff is mentioned only in Moses' speech to Joshua (v. 9bβ) in a contextual phrase easily separated out from the verse without any literary problem, without being mentioned in the main scene of the narrative (vv. 11f.). The staff of Moses or God appears elsewhere in the Book of Exodus (Ex 4.17, 20b; 7.15b, 17b, 20aα*; 17.5, 9), yet all those passages bear signs of late addition.⁴⁶ Most recent redaction-critical studies, therefore, attribute these passages, including the present one (Ex 17.9bβ), to

⁴⁵ S. Schroer in personal communication.

⁴⁶ See further Jeon, *Call of Moses*, p. 157, 175-186.

a later redactional layer made in a post-Priestly stage.⁴⁷ I will not delve into the redactional issue here in detail, for that is neither the purpose of this essay nor possible in this limited space.

The staff of Moses or God is connected to the transformation of Moses' staff to a snake in Exod 4.3-4 (cf. Ex 4.17).⁴⁸ The Staff of God (מטה האלהים) in this redactional layer can, therefore, be understood as a snake-staff, which is another important motif in Egyptian iconography. The depiction of the ceremony of a Pharaoh driving calves is especially a good example, since it had been reproduced throughout Egyptian history from the 5th Dynasty to the early Roman period.⁴⁹ In the depiction, the Pharaoh is holding in his right hand a staff with the head of snake. Also, as G. Rendsburg rightly observes, the Pharaoh is depicted as a herdsman, as Moses is introduced as his father-in-law's herdsman (Ex 3.1); just as Moses held the tail of the snake in Ex 4.4 to transform it again to the staff, the Pharaoh is holding the tail of the snake staff.⁵⁰ Other drawings, such as the funerary papyrus of Muthetepi from the 21st Dynasty and the Book of the Netherworld, contain similar depictions of deities with snake staffs in their hands. The motif was not unknown to the ancient Canaanite cities. Some scarabs, for instance, from the Middle Bronze period found in Tel Aggul (6 km Southwest of Gaza) have figures holding a snake-staff.⁵¹ The motif of the snake-staff seems to have become even more popular in the Persian period. In the back of the Metternich stela, or so-called "Horus stela," from the 30th Dynasty, all the major deities of Egypt appear with

⁴⁷ See further, J. C. Gertz, *Tradition und Redaktion in der Exoduserzählung: Untersuchungen zur Endredaktion des Pentateuch*, FAT I 186, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000, 310f.; Nihan, *Priestly Torah*, p. 25-40; Jeon, *Call of Moses*, p. 175-186.

⁴⁸ See further, Jeon, *ibid.*

⁴⁹ See A. Egberts, *In Quest of Meaning A Study of the Ancient Egyptian Rites of Consecrating the Meret-Chests and Driving the Calves*, Vol 1, Leiden, Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten/Netherlands Inst. for NE, 1995, p. 437.

⁵⁰ See Figure 7 in G. Rendsburg, « Moses as equal to Pharaoh », in *Text, Artifact, and Image: Revealing Ancient Israelite Religion*, G. M. Beckman and T. J. Lewis (eds), Providence, Brown Judaic Studies, 2010, p. 212.

⁵¹ See, e.g., figures 331, 332, 361 in S. Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels*. Schroer finds parallels between those scarab images and Moses' staff. See, *ibid.*, p. 58.

snake-staffs in their hands (registers 2-6).⁵² In this stela, the snake-staffs are the staffs of gods.⁵³ The fact that the biblical redaction of the staff of Moses or God is usually dated also in the Persian period further supports the Egyptian influence on this redactional layer.⁵⁴

The staff motif in our biblical account (Exod 17.9bβ) is not an integral part of the narrative, as we saw. This observation, therefore, indicates that probably both the original composition of the present account (Exod 17.8-16) and the later staff redaction were equally influenced by Egyptian art.

5. An example of the combination of motifs

We have observed so far that the central scene in the biblical account of the Battle with Amalek contains several core motifs from Egyptian iconography, which appear in a combined form. Scholars agree, as we have seen, that such combinations are a very common phenomenon in ancient Egyptian art. An example of such a combination is presented in the study by N. Billing of the Secret One, a western goddess, in the Book of Netherworld.⁵⁵ In the carving of the Secret One from the Valley of the Kings (KV 67, figure 9), the goddess raises her two hands upwards while two snakes (staffs) are placed on either side of her body. According to Billing, this pictorial image is a combination of two different core motifs: the motif of a female deity holding two snakes; and raising two hands upwards. The example for the former presented by Billing is shown in figure 10, a core motif from the Middle Kingdom, in which a naked female deity Aha is holding two snakes, symbolizing fertility and magic.⁵⁶

⁵² See *ibid.*, p. 211.

⁵³ For the use of the snake-staffs as magical artifacts in Egypt, see N. Amzallag, « The Serpent as a symbol of primeval Yahwism », *Semitica* 58, 2016, p. 207-236, esp. 221-223.

⁵⁴ For the dating of the staff redaction, see above n. 43.

⁵⁵ See Billing, « The Secret One », p. 51-71.

⁵⁶ See *ibid.*, p. 52.

This motif provided the core for Shed- and Horus stelae.⁵⁷ The second core motif can be seen in the depiction of the sky goddess Nut with her two hands upraised (figure 11), found in the coffin of Ahhotep Tanedjemet (MMA 12.181.303) from the 18th Dynasty. In this image, Nut, with her two hands upraised, signifies protection or victory over death.⁵⁸ Again, in the depiction of the Secret One (figure 9), the motif of the snake-staffs and upraised hands are combined, producing, according to Billing, a symbolic meaning of protection with her magical power.⁵⁹

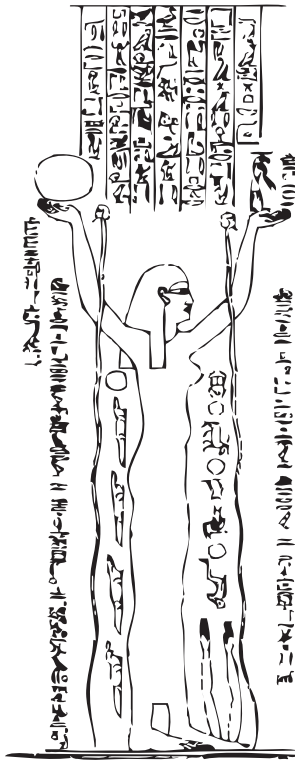


Figure 9. *The Secret One, the Book of Caverns* (Berlin 29). The image is from Billing, « *The Secret One* » (figure 14, p. 64) after: H. Brugsch, *Recueil de Monuments Égyptiens*, 1862 (plate 33, p. 47).

⁵⁷ See *ibid.*, n. 5.

⁵⁸ See *ibid.*, 64f.

⁵⁹ See *ibid.*, p. 64, 67.



Figure 10. The god or goddess Aha. The image is from N. Billing, « *The Secret One* », p. 51-71 (figure 1, p. 52) after: H. Altenmüller, in SAK 13, 1986, 3, figure 1.



Figure 11. The prostrating sky goddess (MMA 12.181.303). The image is from Billing, « *The Secret One* » (figure 14, p. 64).

This example exhibits how different core iconographic motifs are combined and produce together a set of complex meanings. In this light, we may interpret our biblical account in terms of a combination of iconographic core motifs. Our account, especially the central scene of v. 12, combines motifs such as (1) the upraised hands signifying magical or ritual performance, victory, or protection, (2) the triad with the hands of the hero in the middle physically supported by two other figures (Horus at one side), which implies the hero's royal or divine nature as well as the importance of maintaining the upraised position of Moses' hands, and (3) the hero in the middle sitting on a rock (YHWH's throne in v. 16), which signifies the hero's revered status. By producing this combined image, our biblical author probably intended to portray Moses as a figure equivalent to an Egyptian deity or Pharaoh, and as one who has magical or divine power to protect and guarantee the victory of the warriors in battle. The later addition of the motif of the staff of God, that is the snake staff, was probably intended to provide Moses further magical and divine power.

6. Dating and context

The central motif of the present biblical account, Moses' raised hands that strengthen the Israelite army, has often been thought to reflect an ancient notion of Moses as a magician. Previous generations of Pentateuch scholars, therefore, assumed an early monarchic-period origin of the account. The classical source critics have often assigned our text to E, which is no longer tenable;⁶⁰ Noth is not so clear about source assignment, attributing it tentatively to J, assuming that this is old material.⁶¹ Childs follows Noth regarding our account as ancient material, without attributing it to a specific source.⁶² According to some of the more complicated redactional models, the notion of the old narrative core is maintained. E. Zenger, developing the classic JE model, assumes a gradual development through three successive phases: old JE text; the Pentateuch redaction; and the post-P Dtr redaction.⁶³ Valentin also finds six different phases of expansion from the oldest Aaron tradition to the post-P additions.⁶⁴ Similarly, Albertz maintains that the old pre-exilic tradition of the battle with Amalek has been expanded by the post-Priestly, Deuteronomistic redaction, and again

⁶⁰ See, e.g., J. Wellhausen, *Die Composition Des Hexateuchs Und Der Historischen Bücher Des Alten Testaments*, 3. Aufl, Berlin, G. Reimer, 1899, p. 80; H. Holzinger, *Das Zweite Buch Mose Oder Exodus*, *Die Heilige Schrift Des Alten Testaments I*, Edited by E. Kautzsch, 1909, p. 55; S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, 9th ed., Edinburgh, Clark, 1913 (reprinted 1960), p. 30. See also, still recently, W. H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB vol. 2, New York, Doubleday, 1999, p. 615. J. S. Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis*, The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2012.

⁶¹ Noth assigned our account to E in his earlier work (*A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, p. 120, n. 343), but later he assigned it to J (*Exodus*, p. 141).

⁶² See Childs, *Exodus*, p. 313.

⁶³ See E. Zenger, *Israel Am Sinai. Analysen Und Interpretationen Zu Exodus 17 - 34*, Altenberge, Akademische Bibliothek, 1982, p. 76-89. But Zenger assigns v. 12 to a later addition.

⁶⁴ See Valentin, *Aaron*, p. 145-164. Valentin regards v. 12 as the earliest part of the narrative.

located in the current position by the “Exodus Composition” during the exilic period.⁶⁵

A recent tendency in Pentateuch scholarship is, however, to date the present account either to the exilic or to the Persian period. The simpler models of Van Seters and Blum, for example, attribute the account to the exilic Jahwist or Deuteronomistic/stic composition (KD), respectively.⁶⁶ Also, an increasing number of recent studies propose a late, even post-P, date for the entire composition. H.-C. Schmitt, for instance, claims that the episode originated from the Deuteronomistic didactic narrative and was set in the present context through the final editing of the Pentateuch.⁶⁷ Tanner follows Schmitt regarding the purpose and date of the text, assuming the literary unity of the text.⁶⁸ Also, Achenbach maintains that the role of Aaron and Hur as judge in Ex 24.14, which can be assigned to the author of the present account, presupposes both priestly and Deuteronomistic notions of the judicial function of the elders and priests.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ See R. Albertz, *Exodus 1-18*, Zb.At 2.1, Zürich, Theologischer Verlag Zürich (TVZ), 2012, p. 290-295. Also, Fritz claims that the old local tradition of the battle between Israel and Amalek has been incorporated in our biblical text. See V. Fritz, *Israel in Der Wüste. Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung Der Wüstenüberlieferung Des Jahwisten*, Marburger Theologische Studien 7, Marburg, N.G. Elwert, 1970, p. 57.

⁶⁶ See Van Seters, *Moses*, p. 198-207; Blum, *Pentateuch*, 152f. Also, Dozemann follows Blum in a simpler way to assume “D-composition.” See, T. B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, The Eerdmans Critical Commentary, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2009, p. 357, 360-363, 391-398.

⁶⁷ See H.-C. Schmitt, « Die Geschichte vom Sieg über die Amalekiter Ex 17,8-16 als theologische Lehrerzählung », *ZAW* 102, 1990, p. 335-344, esp. 344 (also in *Theologie in Prophetie und Pentateuch. Gesammelte Schriften, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, BZAW 310, Berlin, de Gruyter, 2001, p. 155-164). See also, especially for Aaron and Hur in Ex 24.14, Achenbach, « The story of the Revelation », p. 126-151, esp. 157.

⁶⁸ See H. A. Tanner, *Amalek. Der Feind Israels und der Feind Jahwes. Eine Studie zu den Amalektexten im Alten Testament*, TVZ-Diss., Zürich, Theologischer Verlag, 2005, p. 17-75.

⁶⁹ See R. Achenbach, « The story of the Revelation », 136f. Achenbach identifies Hur with the grandfather of Bezalel, an elder of the tribe of Judah (Ex 31.2; 35,30; 38,22 [P]). See also, Schmitt, “Amalekiter », p. 342; J. I. Durham, *Exodus*, WBC 3, Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1987, p. 236; E. Noort, “Josua und Amalek: Exodus

In my view, too, our account would have been added in a late phase of the formation of the Pentateuch, possibly in a post-P stage. I have argued elsewhere that the account belongs with other redactional passages that estimate the status of the (70) elders of Israel together with Moses, such as Ex 33.7-10; Num 11.16-17, 24b-30; 12.4-10a; Deut 31.14-15, 23. Those passages, I define myself as Elders' Redaction (ER), i.e. a separate, post-P redactional phase made by the scribe(s) representing the social, religious, and political interests of the lay leadership of the Yahwistic community of Yehud. The present account may belong to the second phase of this redaction (thus ER²), which is marked by consistent mentions of and special emphasis on Joshua as the future leader.⁷⁰

The remaining question is then the possible context of the formation of our account and the Egyptian influence in the Persian period. The most probable context is the Diaspora Judahites in Egypt and their interactions with the scribes in Yehud. Especially, an Egyptian name such as Hur was popular in the Egyptian Diaspora, as it is frequently observed in the papyri from Elephantine.⁷¹ As we saw above, Moses, Aaron, and Hur are depicted like the Egyptian deities and/or Pharaohs (Moses), whose magical power particularly helps soldiers in battle. Such an image of Moses is most probably connected to Diaspora Judahites who served as mercenaries. In this vein, two possible origins may be suggested: (1) it is possible that this account had originally been formulated among the Judahite mercenaries in Egypt and was somehow accepted during the formation process of the Pentateuch; or (2) a scribe in Yehud reacted to the growing Egyptian influence in Yehud, possibly through the Egyptian Diaspora, especially after the successful re-

17:8-6 », in *The Interpretation of Exodus. Studies in Honour of Cornelis Houtman*, CBET 44, R. Roukema (ed.), Leuven, Peeters, 2006, p. 155-70, esp. 169f. Noort also dates our episode as post-Priestly.

⁷⁰ See Jeon, « Elders' Redaction (ER) ».

⁷¹ See Jeon, « Hur ».

volt of Inaros (460 BCE), by producing the image of Moses and Israelite leaders as equivalent to the Pharaoh and Egyptian deities.⁷² Whichever is the case, our account indicates that the scribe, who probably represented the interests of the lay leadership group, had a positive and inclusive attitude toward the cultural influence of Egypt and (or through) the Diaspora Judahites in Egypt. One may include this position in the pro-Egyptian voices in the Pentateuch.

7. Conclusion

We have seen so far that the strange scene of Moses' raised hands supported by Aaron and Hur is best explained in connection with Egyptian iconography. In particular, the central scene of the account (v. 12) consists of different core motifs in ancient Egyptian art such as the triad, Horus, sitting on a throne, with raised hands, and physical support of the hands, and the snake staff. In ancient Egyptian art, core pictorial motifs are repeatedly reused and diversely combined, producing different sets of meaning. Our biblical account may be one of the cases of diverse adaptations of the core motifs, producing new meaning in different contexts through their combinations.

The most probable context of the account seems to be the Persian period in terms of the literary stratigraphy of the Pentateuch as well as the geopolitical state of Yehud and Egypt. Viewed from the complex social state in the Yahwistic community of Yehud, the present account represents a pro-Egyptian voice or, at least, a positive attitude toward the Diaspora Judahites in Egypt.

⁷² For geopolitical changes in Egypt during the Persian period and their possible influence on biblical texts, see J. Jeon, "Egyptian Gola in Prophetic and Pentateuchal Traditions: A Socio-Historical Perspective », *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 18 (2018): 12-23.

La collection d'antiquités sudarabiques de François Antonovich

François Bron

EPHE

Abstract. *Publication of South Arabian antiquities from the collection of parisian antiquary François Antonovich.*

La collection d'antiquités sudarabiques de l'antiquaire parisien François Antonovich, qui a pris sa retraite, a été déposée provisoirement au Museo del Istituto Biblico y Oriental de Leon (Espagne). F. Antonovich en a publié le catalogue en un volume hors commerce¹. On y trouve plus d'une centaine de pièces, représentant les différents types d'antiquités provenant de cette région. La plupart des pièces qui portent des inscriptions ont déjà été publiées, mais d'autres sont restées inédites. Ainsi le n° 11, stèle en albâtre à tête de taureau, correspond à CPP 1². Le n° 12 est une table à libations, publiée par Jacques Ryckmans, dans les *Mélanges Löfgren*³. La statuette féminine assise, n° 29, correspond à CPP 3⁴ ; dimensions : hauteur 24 cm, largeur de la base 12,5 cm. La statuette féminine en pied, n° 30, a été publiée naguère par Honeyman⁵. Le n° 34 est une

¹ François Antonovich, *On the Legendary Road of the Kingdoms of Sheba – Treasures from Ancient Yemen and Abyssinia*, (editionsmouseion@aol.com), 2009.

² F. Bron, « Antiquités qatabanites (II) », *Semitica* 50, 2000, p. 230.

³ J. Ryckmans, « Une table à libations avec inscription sabéenne provenant du Ġawf du Yémen », in *On both sides of al-Mandab, Ethiopian, South-Arabic and Islamic Studies presented to Oscar Löfgren on his ninetieth birthday 13 May 1988 by colleagues and friends*, Stockholm, Svenska forskningsinstitutet i Istanbul, 1989, p. 69-81.

⁴ Cf. *op. cit.* à la n. 2, p. 230-231.

⁵ A. M. Honeyman, « Epigraphic South Arabian Antiquities », *JNES* 21, 1962, p. 38-43 (Honeyman 4).

dédicace sabéenne au dieu Aranyada^c (FB – as-Sawdā³ 1)⁶ ; dimensions : hauteur 79 cm, largeur 26,5 cm. Enfin, la statuette en bronze n° 47 a été publiée dans *Semitica* en 1999⁷.

La grande inscription sur plaque de bronze, n° 70, a été étudiée par J. Ryckmans et moi-même⁸ (FB – Maḥram Bilqīs), puis revue par A. Multhoff et P. Stein⁹.

D'autres antiquités inscrites sont encore inédites : c'est le cas du **n° 27**. Il s'agit d'une statuette d'homme debout, en albâtre, dont les bras, aujourd'hui cassés, étaient pliés à la hauteur du coude et tendus en avant dans un geste d'offrande. C'est un type de statuette bien connu, dont J. Pirenne, en 1977, recensait quelques vingt-cinq exemplaires¹⁰. Elle provient selon toute vraisemblance de la nécropole qatabanite de Ḥayd ibn ʿAqīl. Elle mesure 29,5 cm de hauteur, sur 11 cm de largeur à la hauteur des épaules. La base porte le nom

Tbʿkrb

attesté dans tout le sudarabique épigraphique¹¹.

⁶ F. Bron, « Nouvelles inscriptions sudarabiques », *Semitica et Classica* 3, 2010, p. 163-175 : cf. p. 168-170.

⁷ F. Bron, « Une statuette en bronze à inscription en vieil-arabe », *Semitica* 49, 1999, p. 171-177.

⁸ F. Bron - J. Ryckmans, « Une inscription sabéenne sur bronze provenant du Maḥram Bilqīs à Mārib », *Semitica* 49, 1999, p. 161-169.

⁹ A. Multhoff & P. Stein, « Tempeldiebstahl und andere Schlechtigkeiten: Zwei verkaufte sabäische Inschriften », *Orientalia* NS 77/1, 2008, p. 1-44.

¹⁰ J. Pirenne, *Corpus des inscriptions et antiquités sud-arabes - Tome I - section 2*, Louvain, Peeters, 1977, p. I. 351.

¹¹ Cf. H. Hayajneh, *Die Personennamen in den qatabānischen Inschriften*, Hildesheim, Olms, 1998, p. 103 et 306.



Antonovich n° 27

Une autre statuette de même origine est le **n° 31**. La pose est identique, mais seules les mains sont cassées. La hauteur est de 37,5 cm. Le socle porte l'inscription

Ys²rḥ^cm/bn/ʾl

Le nom $Ys^2rh^{\epsilon}m$ est bien attesté en qatabanite (voir, par exemple, S 25/s4/47.12 ou Moussaieff 2)¹², mais ʾl , si le nom est vraiment complet, apparaît uniquement comme épithète de nom masculin dans Moussaieff 32/1.



Antonovich n° 31

¹² Cf. H. Hayajneh, *op. cit.* à la n. 11, p. 276 et 353.

Le n° 74 est une statuette d'albâtre d'une taille exceptionnelle, puisqu'elle mesure 93 cm de hauteur, recomposée à partir de plusieurs morceaux, ce qui n'est pas sans poser problème, car elle est décrite comme une statuette féminine, alors que le socle porte en écriture champlevée le nom

S²hr Hll

Effectivement, la tête ne montre aucune trace de barbe et la coiffure semble bien féminine¹³. Quant au nom *S²hr Hll*, plusieurs souverains, semble-t-il, ont porté ce nom entre le IV^e et le II^e siècle¹⁴. Il est bien difficile de décider duquel il s'agit dans notre cas. L'inscription, avec son *s²* anguleux, semble relever du stade B1 (V^e-III^e siècle) de la paléographie de A. Avanzini¹⁵.

La collection comporte également trois stèles funéraires minéennes. Ces petits monuments ont déjà fait l'objet de nombreuses études ; on pourra se référer en dernier lieu à la contribution de J. Schiettecatte¹⁶ ou à l'étude de A. Lombardi sur les stèles funéraires du British Museum.¹⁷

¹³ Cf. F. E. Betti, « Appendix 2 – South Arabian hairstyles: typologies, characteristics and influences », in *South Arabian funerary stelae from the British Museum Collection*, A. Lombardi (éd.), Rome, Bretschneider, 2016, p. 161-170.

¹⁴ M. Arbach, « Tamna' : histoire et chronologie d'après les inscriptions », *Arabia* 3, 2005-2006, p. 115-133 : cf. p. 120-123. Voir aussi Ch. J. Robin, « IV. Inventaires relatifs aux souverains de Qatabān », in *Tamna' (Yemen), Les fouilles italo-françaises – Rapport final*, A. de Maigret & Ch. J. Robin (éds), Paris, De Boccard, 2016, p. 81-97 : cf. p. 86-87.

¹⁵ Cf. A. Avanzini, *Corpus of South Arabian Inscriptions I – III, Qatabanic, Marginal Qatabanic, Awsanite Inscriptions*, Pise, Plus, 2004.

¹⁶ J. Schiettecatte, « The Arabian Iron Age funerary stelae and the issue of cross-cultural contacts », in *Death and Burial in Arabia and Beyond – Multidisciplinary perspectives*, Lloyd Weeks (éd.), Oxford, Archaeopress, 2010, p. 191-203.

¹⁷ Cf. n. 13.



Antonovich n° 74

Le **n° 36** est une stèle rectangulaire, mesurant 23 cm de hauteur sur 15 cm de largeur et ornée d'un visage indiqué par des yeux, un nez et une bouche schématiques. Elle est d'une qualité esthétique qui contraste avec le caractère généralement assez fruste de ce genre de monuments. On pourra comparer avec la stèle funéraire du roi Waqah'il Riyām¹⁸. La base porte le nom

ʿws¹

très fréquent en minéen¹⁹.



Antonovich n° 36

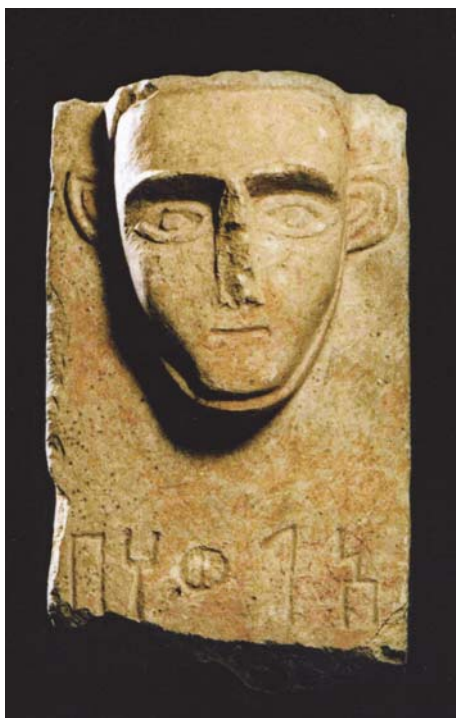
¹⁸ F. Bron, « Notes d'épigraphie minéenne – Une stèle funéraire d'un roi de Ma'in », *Semitica* 55, 2013, p. 173-174. Voir aussi A. Lombardi, *op. cit.* à la n. 13, p. 34-35 et fig. 14.

¹⁹ S. F. al-Sa'īd, *Die Personennamen in den minäischen Inschriften*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1995, p. 21-22 et 67.

Les n° 40 et 41 sont des stèles avec une tête en relief, d'un type bien connu²⁰. Le **n° 40**, dont les dimensions ne sont pas indiquées et dont la face ressemble à celle de YM 29120²¹, porte le nom

ʾlwhb

attesté dans les quatre langues sudarabiques et en safaitique²². On le retrouve sur les stèles al-Jawf 04.70, YM 30008 et YM 30020.



Antonovich n° 40

²⁰ M. Arbach, J. Schiettecatte & I. al-Hādī, *Sanʿāʾ National Museum - Part III, Collection of Funerary Stelae from the Jawf valley*, Sanʿāʾ, 2008, p. 171-178. Voir aussi A. Lombardi, *op. cit.* à la n. 13, p. 46.

²¹ Cf. *op. cit.* à la n. 20, n° 400, p. 171. Les auteurs datent cette stèle du 3^e siècle avant notre ère.

²² S. F. al-Saʿīd, *op. cit.* à la n. 19, p. 20 et 65.

Le **n° 41** mesure 21 cm sur 14,5 cm et porte le nom

‘*mḍr*’

Ce nom est déjà connu en minéen, sabéen et qatabanite, mais n’est pas apparu jusqu’ici sur ce type de stèles²³.



Antonovich n° 41

²³ S. F. al-Sa‘īd, *op. cit.* à la n. 19, p. 38 et 140.

Deux fragments d'épîtres pauliniennes (1 Thess. et 1 Cor.) en araméen christopalestinien

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Abstract. *First edition of two fragments of parchment preserved in the Bibliothèque nationale de France and containing passages of Paul's Epistles.*

Présentation des fragments

La Bibliothèque nationale de France¹ conserve, sous le numéro d'inventaire Hébreu 1489 (1-14), un ensemble de 12 fragments de manuscrits hébreux accompagnés d'une lettre de William Mayor et d'autres papiers, reçus en don en 2008². Les fragments 1 et 9 ont en commun de conserver en écriture supérieure les restes du Talmud de Jérusalem et des fragments de texte en christopalestinien en écriture inférieure³. La notice descriptive en ligne du fragment 9 indique que « ce fragment provient du même codex du Talmud de Jérusalem que les fragments de la Guenizah du Caire conservés à la Bibliothèque universitaire de Cambridge, dans la collection Taylor-Schechter : T-S F 17.4, T-S 12.755–756, T-S 20.157. Le texte du fragment suit directement celui de T-S 20.157 ». Cette remarque suffit

¹ Je tiens à remercier ici M^{me} Judith Schlanger (Directeur d'études, EPHE) pour m'avoir très aimablement signalé l'existence de ces manuscrits, et M. Laurent Hérischer (Conservateur, BnF) qui m'a permis de consulter les originaux et m'a encouragé à les publier. Ma reconnaissance va aussi aux relecteurs de cet article qui, par leurs précieuses remarques, ont permis d'en améliorer la qualité.

² On trouvera une notice détaillée de cet ensemble à l'adresse : <http://archive-setmanuscripts.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc11361c>.

³ Photographies du fr. 1 à l'adresse : <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b525032847> ; photographies du fr. 9 à l'adresse : <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b525032919>.

pour affirmer que les fragments parisiens proviennent eux aussi de la Guenizah de la synagogue Ben Ezra du Caire⁴.

Les deux feuillets ne sont pas de la même main : le fr. 1 a été écrit avec un calame plus fin dans un style plus souple que celui du fr. 9. En particulier, on note que les obliques des **λ** et des **ϝ** sont plus inclinées que celles du fr. 9 et que le scribe paraît moins marquer les contrastes entre pleins et déliés. Mais, compte tenu de l'état dégradé des deux fragments, il est difficile d'aller plus avant dans une analyse paléographique, sinon pour suggérer que le fr. 1 est peut-être un peu plus récent que le fr. 9.

Bien qu'il soit difficile de dater avec précision ces fragments, la proposition de Gwilliam pour les fragments de Cambridge⁵, à savoir le 7^e ou le 8^e siècle, paraît tout à fait plausible et cette datation semble convenir à nos deux fragments.

1. Fragment BnF, Hébr. 1489 (1)

Le texte supérieur a été copié perpendiculairement au texte inférieur, qui avait été écrit sur deux colonnes. Le feuillet originel a été plié en deux et nous ne conservons que le demi-feuillet supérieur. Il est brisé horizontalement au travers de la 11^e ligne de texte selon ce qui est devenu la pliure centrale du bifolio dans l'écriture supérieure. Le folio christopalestinien devait donc contenir 21 ou 22 lignes par page originellement. Le fragment mesure 12,5 cm de hauteur et 19,5 cm de largeur. La marge supérieure est d'environ 2,5 cm, tout comme la marge latérale extérieure ; la marge latérale intérieure et l'entrecolonne mesurent tous deux 2 cm. Les réglures et les piqûres du manuscrit sont encore bien visibles. Le module linéaire est de 0,9 cm, et l'écriture occupe une hauteur moyenne de 0,5 cm. Les colonnes ont une largeur de 6,5 cm chacune.

⁴ T-S 12. 755-756 contiennent 1 Cor. 5, 10 – 6, 1, avec de nombreuses lacunes : il s'agit de deux petits morceaux non jointifs qui trouvent place dans la même colonne de texte. T-S 20.157, un double feuillet presque intégralement conservé, contient 2 Cor. 3, 2 – 4, 10. Nous n'avons pas trouvé d'information sur le premier fragment.

⁵ *The Palestinian Version of the Holy Scriptures: Five more Fragments acquired by the Bodleian Library*, edited with introduction and annotations by G. H. Gwilliam, B. D., *Anecdota Oxoniensia* vol. I, part 5, London, Clarendon Press, 1893, p. x.

À l'exception des parties proches de la pliure, rongées et tachées, tout le texte a pu être déchiffré. Notre fragment contient au recto la fin du verset 1 Thess. 1, 8 et le début du v. 1, 9 (col. a), puis (col. b) la fin du v. 2, 1 et le début du v. 2, 2 ; au verso sont conservés la fin du v. 2, 4 et le début du v. 2, 5 (col. a), puis (col. b) les derniers mots du v. 2, 6 et le début du v. 2, 7. Les v. 1, 10 et 2, 3 sont entièrement perdus.

De cette épître, nous conservions jusqu'alors sept fragments comme récapitulé dans le tableau ci-dessous :

1, 1-3	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Syr. c. 15 (P) v
1, 1-9	Washington, Green Collection, Codex Climaci Rescr. II, 57
3, 1 - 4, 14	Cambridge, University Library, T-S 16.326
4, 3-15	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Syr. c. 16 (P)
4, 13-18	Cambridge, Westminster College Library
4, 15-17	Genizah de Damas, fr. II, 14r
5, 15-28	Washington, Green Collection, Codex Climaci Rescr. II, 24

N'étaient pas encore attestés les versets 1, 10 à 2, 20 et 5, 1-14. Notre fragment complète partiellement le verset 1, 9 et ajoute les versets 2, 1-2.4-7 à notre connaissance.

Transcription du fragment

Recto	b	a
	ܐܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ 1 (2, 1)	ܐܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ 1 (1, 8)
	ܐܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ	ܐܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ
	ܐܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ	ܐܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ (1, 9)
	ܐܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ	ܐܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ
	ܐܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ 5	ܐܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ 5
	ܐܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ (2, 2)	ܐܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ
	ܐܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ	ܐܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ
	ܐܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ	ܐܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ
	ܐܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ 10	ܐܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ 10
	[]ܐ [ܐܠܐ]ܐܠܐ ܐܠܐ	ܐܠܐ []

2, 5 (v° a11) : il est possible de supposer l'expression ܠܢܝܠܐܢܐ qui, en composition avec la négation ܠܐ de la ligne précédente, traduirait bien le grec οὐδέποτε, « jamais ».

2, 7 (v° b9) : la trace qui suit le *taw* peut être interprétée comme un *yudh*. Compte tenu des restes lisibles et du texte grec sous-jacent (ὥς ἐὰν τροφὸς θάλπη τὰ ἑαυτῆς τέκνα, « comme une nourrice entoure de soins ses enfants »), on peut déduire que le mot lacunaire traduit probablement le verbe θάλπη, « entoure de soins ». Si tel était bien le cas, on attendrait un verbe au féminin et à l'inaccompli. Il faudrait alors voir dans le *taw* initial la préformative d'un inaccompli à la troisième personne du singulier féminin. La terminaison en ܐ impliquerait un verbe de forme IIIy. Le *taw* initial est suivi d'une lettre qui pourrait être un *yudh* ou la première partie d'un *tsade*. Si l'on retient la première possibilité, il n'y aurait alors guère que la lettre *hê* qui remplirait convenablement la lacune. Le sens de « plaire, être profitable » du verbe ܠܡܝܢ pourrait convenir ici et l'on devrait alors supposer le *peal* inaccompli ܠܡܝܢܐ. La préformative -ܐ pour le *peal* n'est pas courante mais n'est pas impossible non plus. L'autre hypothèse nous amènerait à proposer la forme ܠܡܝܢܐ du verbe ܠܡܝܢ, « surveiller, prendre soin ». Aucune de ces deux propositions ne nous a paru pleinement satisfaisante, aussi avons-nous préféré ne pas combler la lacune dans notre transcription. Les lignes suivantes (v° b10-11) sont trop endommagées pour que l'on puisse faire des hypothèses sérieuses quant à leur contenu.

On remarque quelques graphies inattendues. Deux sont des indications de prononciation à l'aide de *matres lectionis* qui n'étaient pas encore attestées jusqu'à présent : en r° a8, on lit ܠܢܝܠܐܢܐ, « vers vous », au lieu de ܠܢܝܠܐܢܐ ; l'ajout de ܐ exclut une mauvaise lecture *lūt* au profit de *lwāt*. On remarque pourtant que la forme affixée régulière ܠܢܝܠܐܢܐ apparaît en r° b4 et que la préposition sans affixe ܠܢܝܠܐܢܐ est utilisée en r° a10. En r° b1, on relève ܠܢܝܠܐܢܐ, « vous », au lieu de ܠܢܝܠܐܢܐ, que l'on trouve en r° b9.

Il faut aussi souligner, en 2, 2 (r° b10), la transcription du nom grec de la ville de Philippi (Φίλιπποι) en ܠܢܝܠܐܢܐ au lieu de la graphie ܠܢܝܠܐܢܐ que l'on rencontre dans le témoignage

araméen christopalestinien de Ac. 20, 6⁷ et de Phil. 1, 1⁸. Par ailleurs, l'ethnique Φιλιππίσιοι, « Philippiens », est attesté trois fois en araméen christopalestinien, toujours sous la forme ܠܠܐܢܐ ܕܩܝܠܝܦܝܝܐ⁹. La leçon de notre manuscrit avec les deux lettres - ܕܠܐ- pour indiquer la prononciation de -ππ- est donc unique.

On relève l'usage récurrent de la forme ܡܠ- du pronom personnel de la première personne du pluriel, dans sa forme pleine (ܡܠܢ, v° a4), de l'affirmative du parfait (ܡܠܚܝܬܐ, r° b7 ; ܡܠܝܬܐ, r° b8 ; ܡܠܠܡܐ, v° b3 ; ܡܠܚܝܬܐ, v° b7), et du pronom personnel affixe (ܡܠܬܐ, v° a9). Font exception ܡܠܠܡܐ (r° b3) et ܡܠܚܝܬܐ (r° b7). Mais faute de témoin parallèle pour ces versets, rien ne permet d'établir s'il s'agit d'une spécificité de notre manuscrit.

Notre texte suit fidèlement le texte grec tel qu'il nous est connu¹⁰. On lit notamment en 2, 7 (v° b8) ܡܠܠܐ qui traduit νήπιοι, « petits enfants ». La tradition est ici largement divisée entre les témoins qui donnent cette leçon et ceux qui préfèrent ἤπιοι, « aimables ».

La comparaison avec les versets déjà attestés met en évidence une leçon de notre manuscrit plus fidèle au texte grec : à la fin de 1, 8, le Codex Climaci Rescriptus II (ci-après CCR2)¹¹ donne ܡܠܠܐ (équivalent à αὐτοῖς τι) où notre manuscrit ne donne que ܡܠܐ (r° a2) conformément au texte grec qui ne donne que τι¹².

Ce fragment, outre qu'il porte à notre connaissance des versets néotestamentaires non encore attestés en araméen christopalestinien, a la particularité de présenter des aspects graphiques et linguistiques peu fréquents voire uniques. Mais la taille réduite du passage ne permet pas d'approfondir l'analyse plus avant.

⁷ Cf. CCPA IIB, p. 28.

⁸ Cf. CCPA IIB, p. 136.

⁹ CCPA IIB, p. 135 (titre de la *Lettre aux Philippiens*) ; p. 146 (titre courant du manuscrit) ; p. 150 (Phil. 4, 15).

¹⁰ Pour la comparaison avec le texte grec du NT, nous nous appuyons sur la 27^e édition révisée de Nestle-Aland.

¹¹ Cf. CCPA IIB, p. 163-164.

¹² Dans son *editio princeps* du texte, Agnes Smith-Lewis avait relevé cet ajout. Cf. *Codex Climaci Rescriptus... transcribed and edited by Agnes Smith-Lewis, with seven facsimiles, Horae semiticae VIII*, Cambridge, University Press, 1909, p. 166-167.

2. Fragment BnF, Hébr. 1489 (9)

Contrairement au fragment précédent, le fr. 9 est conservé sur toute la hauteur de la page, et son texte supérieur a été copié parallèlement au texte inférieur. Le feuillet a subi, dans un coin supérieur, un rétrécissement dû à l'humidité et, à cause de cela, une déformation avec cassure dans l'autre coin supérieur. Il s'inscrit donc aujourd'hui dans un rectangle de 19 cm de large et 26,5 cm de haut. À l'origine, le feuillet devait mesurer 24,5 cm de haut. La marge supérieure est de 3 cm et la marge inférieure de 4 cm ; la marge extérieure est de 2,5 cm, la marge intérieure et l'entrecolonne sont de 2 cm ; les colonnes mesurent environ 6,25 cm de large. Les réglures sont encore nettement visibles. La page contient 22 lignes par colonne et l'interligne est de 0,85 cm environ. L'écriture occupe la moitié du module linéaire en hauteur. La mise en page est donc proche de celle du premier fragment.

La lecture du feuillet à l'aide d'une lampe à ultraviolets a permis de déchiffrer l'essentiel du texte préservé, et de faire des conjectures fiables pour les passages détériorés, comme la partie supérieure droite du recto, fort endommagée.

En 1, 11 (v° a16), le scribe a ajouté dans l'interligne supérieur les mots omis ܐܘܬܪܐ ܕܐܝܬܐ, « à votre sujet », correspondant au grec περί ὑμῶν. Nous les avons réinsérés à leur place dans notre transcription.

Le fragment contient 1 Cor. 1, 2-16, mais le début et la fin du v. 1, 2 et la fin du v. 1, 16 manquent. Le tableau suivant récapitule les passages préservés de cette épître en araméen christopalestinien, avec l'indication des manuscrits :

1, 6-17	Washington, Green Collection, Codex Climaci Rescr. II, 21
1, 18-25	Cambridge, Westminster College Library
3, 17-4, 15	Washington, Green Collection, Codex Climaci Rescr. II, 11+10
5, 10-6, 1	Cambridge, University Library, T-S 12.756+12.755
9, 23-10, 15	Genizah de Damas, fr. XIV, 3 (1)
10, 1-4	Cambridge, Westminster College Library
11, 23-32	Cambridge, Westminster College Library
12, 21-13, 7	Genizah de Damas, fr. XIV, 3 (2)
13, 4-14, 14	Washington, Green Collection, Codex Climaci Rescr. II, 19+13

14, 24-15, 10	Washington, Green Collection, Codex Climaci Rescr. II, 15+22
15, 1-11	Cambridge, Westminster College Library
15, 24-49	Washington, Green Collection, Codex Climaci Rescr. II, 8+18
16, 16-24	Washington, Green Collection, Codex Climaci Rescr. II, 20

Les versets non encore attestés étaient : 1, 1-5 ; 1, 26-3, 16 ; 4, 16-5, 9 ; 6, 2-9, 22 ; 10, 15-11, 22 ; 11, 33-12, 20 ; 14, 15-23 ; 15, 12-23 ; 15, 50-16, 15. Par ses premières lignes, notre fragment ajoute donc les versets 1, 2-5 à notre connaissance du texte, et complète la lacune du verset 1, 10, dont le premier éditeur pouvait encore lire quelques mots mais qui semblent aujourd'hui ne plus être lisibles¹³.

Transcription du fragment

recto	b	a
וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים 1	וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים 1 (1, 2)	
וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים (1, 6)	וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים	
וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים	וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים	
וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים	וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים	
וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים 5	וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים 5	
וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים (1, 7)	וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים	
וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים	וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים	
וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים	וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים (1, 3)	
וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים 10	וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים 10	
וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים	וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים	
וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים (1, 8)	וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים	
וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים	וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים (1, 4)	
וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים	וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים	
וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים 15	וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים 15	
וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים	וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים	
וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים	וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים	
וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים	וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים	
וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים (1, 9)	וְיִלְכְּדוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם הַחַיִּים	

¹³ Cf. CCPA IIB, p. 69, notamment l'apparat critique qui indique les lectures faites par Agnes Smith-Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

1. $\lambda \in \mathbb{R}$ 20 (1, 5)
 2. $\lambda \in \mathbb{R}$
 3. $\lambda \in \mathbb{R}$

a

1
 : רִיבֵי מִלְכָּה
 וְהָיָה מִלְכָּה (1, 10)
 מִלְכָּה : מִלְכָּה
 5
 מִלְכָּה : מִלְכָּה
 וְהָיָה מִלְכָּה
 : וְהָיָה מִלְכָּה
 מִלְכָּה מִלְכָּה
 : וְהָיָה מִלְכָּה 10
 מִלְכָּה
 וְהָיָה מִלְכָּה
 מִלְכָּה מִלְכָּה
 : מִלְכָּה מִלְכָּה
 מִלְכָּה מִלְכָּה 15 (1, 11)
 מִלְכָּה מִלְכָּה
 מִלְכָּה : מִלְכָּה
 : מִלְכָּה מִלְכָּה
 מִלְכָּה מִלְכָּה (1, 12)
 מִלְכָּה : מִלְכָּה 20
 מִלְכָּה מִלְכָּה
 מִלְכָּה מִלְכָּה

Comme il a déjà été dit, le feuillet est particulièrement abîmé dans un coin supérieur : un morceau du parchemin a disparu et la zone s'est trouvée contractée et brunie sous l'effet de l'humidité. On observe donc des lacunes en r° a1-7 et v° b1-5.

1, 2 (r° a1-6) : bien que nous n'ayons pas de parallèles pour ce verset, il a été possible de combler les lacunes avec une certaine

assurance en s'appuyant sur le texte grec sous-jacent et sur les lettres encore visibles.

1, 2 (r° a7) : la ligne est trop endommagée pour être lue. De plus, les traces lisibles ne coïncident pas avec la lecture attendue $\Lambda\iota\omicron$, qui traduirait le grec καὶ ἡμῶν, « et le nôtre ». Nous n'avons pas de proposition pour combler cette lacune convenablement.

1, 12 (v° b1-5) : nous avons comblé les lacunes en nous appuyant sur les lettres restantes et le témoignage parallèle de CCR2.

La comparaison de notre feuillet avec le manuscrit CCR2, qui contient 1 Cor. 1, 6-17, laisse apparaître quelques variantes graphiques¹⁴.

1, 11 (v° a17) : le fragment transcrit fidèlement le grec Χλοῆς, « de Chloé », en $\omega\omega\omega\omega$ alors que CCR2 a $\omega\omega\omega\omega$.

Puis nous lisons $\omega\omega\omega\omega$, où CCR2 donne $\omega\omega\omega\omega$, « divisions, discordes ». Notre fragment donne peut-être ici une graphie alternative à la forme régulière rencontrée dans CCR2, mais on peut y voir aussi un nom d'agent, « des gens qui sèment la discorde ».

1, 14 (v° b15) et 1, 16 (v° b21) : on trouve deux fois la graphie $\omega\omega\omega\omega$ où le manuscrit CCR2 donne $\omega\omega\omega\omega$.

1, 15 (v° b18) : notre manuscrit donne la graphie $\omega\omega\omega\omega$ où CCR2 donne $\omega\omega\omega\omega$.

Du point de vue linguistique, nous n'avons relevé qu'un phénomène particulier :

1, 10 (v° a3) et 1, 12 (v° a19) : notre manuscrit présente des formes verbales avec pronoms enclitiques où CCR2 recourt aux formes pleines : ainsi en v° a3, $\omega\omega\omega\omega$, « je demande », plutôt que $\omega\omega\omega\omega$ $\omega\omega\omega\omega$, et en v° a19, $\omega\omega\omega\omega$, « je dis », plutôt que $\omega\omega\omega\omega$ $\omega\omega\omega\omega$.

On relève quelques leçons propres à notre manuscrit :

1, 7 (r° b9) : le fragment présente un surprenant $\omega\omega\omega\omega$, « ses dons », alors que le grec n'a que χαρίσματα,

¹⁴ Étant donné l'état du manuscrit, il est parfois très difficile de relever la présence des points, qu'ils marquent le pluriel, une vocalisation ou une ponctuation interphrastique. Leur absence, dans notre transcription, signifie que nous n'avons pas été en mesure de les lire, non qu'ils n'aient jamais été notés par le scribe. Les mêmes raisons peuvent expliquer l'absence de points dans les éditions de CCR2. Le relevé de ces différences ne serait donc pas significatif.

sans possessif. CCR2 a le fautif ܡܢ ܕܠܗܝܬܐ¹⁵ ; notre texte a la forme régulière, mais avec un suffixe possessif ܡܢ ܕܠܗܝܬܐ ; ni CCR2 ni ce fragment ne semblent porter le signe du pluriel (*seyame*), mais il ne peut s'agir que d'un pluriel, « pas un de ses dons », à moins que le traducteur n'ait été influencé par le grec qui porte une forme au singulier (μηδένι χάρισματι). Aucun témoin grec ne paraît avoir le possessif, qui figure cependant dans la Peshitta. Néanmoins, il est difficile de déterminer s'il s'agit ici d'une influence du syriaque ou s'il existait une tradition grecque avec ce possessif.

Une variante plus importante se trouve juste à la suite (r° b10) : où nous lisons sans difficulté ܕܡܢܗܝܬܐ, « vous attendez », le manuscrit CCR2 donne, semble-t-il, ܕܡܢܗܝܬܐ, « vous espérez ». La leçon présentée par notre manuscrit nous paraît plus conforme au grec : ce verbe est déjà utilisé ailleurs pour traduire le verbe grec ἀπεκδέχομαι (notamment, pour ne retenir que les Épîtres pauliniennes, Rom. 8, 19 ; Gal. 5, 5 ; Phil. 3, 20), alors que le pael de ܕܡܢܗܝܬܐ traduit plutôt les formes du grec ἐλπίζω.

1, 10 (v° a14) : où nous lisons ܡܢ ܕܠܗܝܬܐ ܡܢ, CCR2 a ܡܢ ܡܢ ܕܠܗܝܬܐ, ce qui n'est probablement qu'une erreur de transcription.

Pour les passages non encore attestés en araméen, nous n'avons trouvé aucune variante par rapport au texte grec sous-jacent. L'ensemble des variantes relevées dans notre fragment par rapport à CCR2 montre que ces deux témoins ne dépendent pas directement l'un de l'autre et dérivent probablement de deux branches différentes du texte. Leurs différences ne sont pas non plus telles que l'on puisse supposer l'existence de deux traductions différentes ici.

¹⁵ Agnes Smith-Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 166, avait édité la forme corrigée sans précision, mais CCPA IIB, p. 69 relève à juste titre la forme fautive du manuscrit.

An Incantation Bowl from the Matenadaran¹

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Résumé. Cet article publie un nouveau bol magique judéo-araméen en faveur de deux frères, Adib et Şanah, fils de Immay. Le texte mentionne les noms de plusieurs anges : ²qb³l, ³sgyn³l et ³by³l. On y trouve aussi des citations bibliques dont une semble nouvelle dans ce corpus.

This bowl is housed in the Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts in Yerevan, Armenia, commonly referred to as the Matenadaran, under the number MS 132. It was donated to the Matenadaran by Iranian-Armenian J. Khudaverdian, on June 21, 1971. Its diameter is 14 cm,² the depth is 4.6 cm.³ The color of the bowl is a yellowish-brown, its text is written in black ink, it is broken into four pieces and its base is round. The language is Aramaic with Hebrew square characters. There are two biblical Hebrew quotations. The layout of the writing is in circular lines which makes the division of phrases difficult, particularly when some words are missing. The ink is mostly faded in the first lines which makes the reading difficult. A continuous circular line separates the last two lines. Lines 12 and 13 begin with a small line, a hyphen. The names of the angels, in line 7, are overlined.

¹ My gratitude and acknowledgements go to the director of the Institute of Ancient Manuscripts Matenadaran, Vahan Ter-Ghevondian, and Ruzan Poghosyan, senior researcher at Matenadaran, for their permission and help in publishing this bowl. The photos are made by the digital department of the Matenadaran Library.

² Poghosyan, R., p. 18.

³ The measure of the depth was given to me by Ms. Poghosyan.



Transcription

1. bšwm... dqmy^o?...
2. ... wqr'? lyh? bk twb?....
3. ... lyh? bhwn d'dyb wd[š'nh bny 'ymy]...
4. ...?yn? wmn n[w]r' wmn šwt'...
5. ... q' šlhwbtyt 'yšt' wmyl kl...
6. w'p 'dyb wš'nh bny 'ymy l' 'ynyš wl'... wytqymwn
7. qqb'l šmyh 'qb'l qrn lyh ssnyq'l šmyh 'sqyn'l qrn lyh... [-by'l]
šmyh 'by'l qrn lyh
8. ym' wybšt' twry' wrm't' 'r'h wkl dbh šmyh (vacat) wkl dbh...
šryh? wkl?... msyryn

9. ly dyly 'dyb br 'ymy wly dyly š'nh br 'ymy l'sw l'sw lhwn? mn...
wpšrt'?... wmn kys' sny' byšt' wkl...
10. wmn ḥršy byšy wmn 'wbdyn tyqypyn wmy[n [k]ys' sny' wmn kys'
sny' wmn kys' sny'... wmn kys' d'l tlt 'wrḥt' wmn šqwpyt' byšt'
11. dykry wmn lyly'th nyqb'th wmn šb' zr'y'th byš'th dbṭnn wyldn
šydy bny nwr' wmn mlw[y]t' dmlwyh blylyh wškbh b'yymmh
wšl'th
12. - b'ytt' wqbr' wmtqryh dymnys lyly mn h's wmn hmšḥyt 'mn 'mn
slh sqsyn sqywh šmyh dml'k mwt' w'ymr l' dhdyn qmy'
13. - wy'mr yhw h' l' ḥštn yg'r yhw bk ḥštn wyg'r yhw bk hbwhyr
byrwšlm hlw' zh 'wd mwšl m's myhr šw'h lhptyh wl' ymw t' lšht'
wl' yḥsr lhmw 'syr qṭyr lhws ḥtym
14. qmy' dnn 'l yd 'srgys rbh d'sr 'ysryn wlḥyš lyḥšyn wqtr qyṭryn
wḥtym ḥtmy[n w'y]nš qyṭryh l' > šry wḥtmyh [l' tbr 'mn 'mn slh
h]llwyh

Translation

1. In the name of... of amulet? ...
2. ... and he call? him? In you again?...
3. ... of Adib and [Šanah the sons of Immay]...
4. ... and from the fire and from the south wind...
5. ... flame of fire and from all...
6. And also Adib and Šanah the sons of Immay, nobody and
no... and may they be endured/established
7. qqb'l his name 'qb'l we call him, ssnyq'l his name 'sqyn'l we
call him,... [-by'l] his name 'by'l we call him.
8. The sea, the dry land, the mountains, the heights, the
earth and all in it, the sky and all in it... and all...
9. are bound to myself Adib son of Immay and to myself
Šanah son of Immay to heal them from... and the
mitigation... and from the evil kisa-spirit and all...
10. and from the evil sorceries, and from powerful practices
and from the hateful kisa-spirit and from the hateful kisa-
spirit and from the hateful kisa-spirit and from the kisa-
spirit which is on the three roads, and from the evil male
(spirit) knockings,

11. and from the female liliths, and from the seven evil descendants who become pregnant and give birth to demons, the sons of the fire, and from the companion which accompanies during the night and sleeps in the morning, and dominates
12. the woman and the man, and she is called *dymnys lyly*; from the fire and the destruction. Amen, Amen, Selah. *sqsyn sqywh* is the name of the angel of death.
13. And the Lord said unto Satan, the Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? The oppressed shall speedily be released; he shall not die [and go down to the Pit], nor shall he lack his bread. This amulet is bound, tied, charmed and sealed
14. by the hand of Asergius the great who binds the binders, charms the charmers, who make knots and seals the sealers whose knot no man can untie and whose seal [no one can break. Amen, Amen, Selah, Ha]lleluiah.

Commentary

l. 3. *d'dyb wd[š'nh bny 'ymy]*: the restoration is based on line 6. *'dyb* "Adib" is an Arabic name which means "polite" or "author, writer"; we find this name once in CMB⁴ M108, 2 "Adib son of Bathshabta".

⁴ Abbreviations:

ABS: Shaul Shaked, J.N. Ford, and Siam Bhayro with contributions from Matthew Morgenstern and Naama Vilozy, 2013, *Aramaic Bowl Spells Jewish Babylonian Aramaic Bowls*, Volume One, Brill.

AIT: Montgomery, J. A. 1913, *Aramaic Incantations texts from Nippur*, Publications of the Babylonian Section 3, Philadelphia.

AMB: Naveh J. – Shaked, Sh. 1985, *Amulets and Magic Bowls, Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity*, The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Brill, Leiden.

CAIB: Isbell, Ch. D. 1975, *Corpus of the Aramaic Incantation Bowls*, Dissertation Series 17, Missoula, Montana.

CAMIB: Segal, J. B. 2000, *Catalogue of the Aramaic and Mandaic incantation Bowls in the British Museum*, London, British Museum Press.

Rarely in the Aramaic bowls do we find Arabic names; its use proves that magic bowls were still written after the Arabic conquest. *ṣṇh* “Ṣanah” is an Aramaic word with the sense of “basket of palm leaves”⁵.

1. 4. *šwt*’: in Aramaic this word can have three meanings: speech, germination, and the south wind (akk. *šūtu* south)⁶; in this text the sense of the south wind, which is a hot wind in the Middle East (used until now, cf. *الهواء الجنوبي* “the southern wind”) better fits the context cf. the words *nwr*’ and *šlhwbty* *ṣyšt*’.

1. 5. *šlhwbty* *ṣyšt*’: this expression is found in AIT 14,7 and Fain, Ford, Lyavdansky: Text V. S-447, l. 8, p. 297. The spelling *šlhwbty* (with w) is found also in AMB B8, 4. In some texts we have *šlhwbty* *dnwr*’.⁷

1. 6. *ṣnyš*: we find such writing in Bhayro *et al.* II, 19-20.

1. 7. *qqb*’l *šmyh* *ṣqb*’l... *ssnyq*’l *šmyh* *ṣqyn*’l: the scribe changed the first letter of the repeated name to *ṣ*; in the second name he also changed the order of some letters. *[-ṣby*’l] *šmyh* *ṣby*’l *qrn lyh*: the scribe should follow the same formula as before, change the first letter to *ṣ*; for the third angel we expect a name like *[-ṣby*’l] changed to *ṣby*’l.

1. 8. *msyryn*: there is an assimilation of the *ṣ* after the consonant m.

1. 9. *ly dyly*: “my own”, we find in AIT 7,12 *ydy dyly* “my own hand”. This term is found in Ford (296, 1).⁸ *wpšrt*’? “release, mitigation”: this word is attested in CAIB 44,9; 62,5 and CAMIB 039,15.

1. 10. *kys*’ *sny*’: *kisa*-spirit (disease, demon, Akk. *kis libbi* “intestinal disease”, DJBA, p. 576). cf. Naveh-Shaked 1993, who read *kysyn* “blows” in a similar context (MSF B19:6 *wqtryn wkysyn wmlt*’

CMB: Levene, D. 2003, *A Corpus of Magic Bowls, Incantations Texts in Jewish from the Late Antiquity*, Kegan Paul, London, New York, Bahrain.

DJBA: Sokoloff, M. 2002, *A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic*, Bar Ilan University Press, Ramat Gan, Israel.

⁵ DJBA, 967.

⁶ DJBA, 1126.

⁷ AMB 13, 18; Ford – Ten-Ami, p. 222, l. 13.

⁸ Ford, p. 251.

“knots, blows, spells”). According to DJBA (p. 576), *kys* “a disease, demon” derives from Akkadian *kīsu*.⁹

1. 11. *wmn šb‘zr‘y’t h byš’t h*: “seed, descendant, family”, the number seven is used with words in Fain et al.: *bšwm hlyn šb[‘ mylyn dyšmy’ w’r’h kbyšyn bhyn* “And may you be subdued by the name(s) of these seven [words by which heaven and earth are subdued.”¹⁰ *dbtñn wyldn*: these two verbs come together (AMB13,12-13). *mlw[y]t’ dmlwyh*: probably there is a y on the crack; we find a similar formula in CMB M59,7 p. 35: *mlwyt’ dlwy’*. *mlwyt’* is the name of a female demon which derives from the root *lwy* “to accompany”; in Syriac Christian amulets we have the form *šwtpt’* “companion, partner” which is translated into the vernacular Arabic *qarinah* “partner”.¹¹

1. 12. *mn hš wmn hmšhyt* “from the fire and from the destruction”: two Hebrew biblical words. Usually Biblical Hebrew is used in whole verses and not separated words. The phrase *’mn ’mn slh* is the standard device to mark the end of a text or the end of a paragraph in Jewish Aramaic bowls. The isolated *’mn* is used to mark the end of a paragraph, albeit rarely (JBA 6:12). *sqsyn sqywh šmyh dml’k mwt’*: we find such formula in CMB 101,13: *sksyn sqsw n qš šmyh dml’k mwt’ šmyh ‘yqrwn qrn lk dyn šmh rbh dml’k mwt’ ‘ryq mynyh* “*sksyn sqsw n qš* his name. Barren one, we call you! This is the great name from which the angel of death flees”. *wymr l’ dhdyn qmy’*: probably the scribe anticipates what he will write later, writes wrongly or has combined two phrases: *wymr l’* for *wymr yhwh l’* (l. 13); *dhdyn qmy’* for *qmy’ dnn* (l. 14).

1. 13. *wy’mr yhwh l’ hštn...*: is a quotation from Zechariah 3:2; its use is common in magic bowls (see for example: AIT 4,5; Naveh – Shaked 1993, 25; AMIB, 23, 12; Tatyana Fain et al., Text VI. S-448, line 5-6). *wyg’r yhwh bk* is a repetition. *myhr šw’h lhptyh wl’ ymwt wl’ yhsr lhmw* is a quotation from Isaiah 51,14: *מְהֵרָה צִטָּה לְהַפְתִּיחַ וְלֹא-יָמוּת וְלֹא יִחָסֵר לֶחֶם*: “The oppressed shall speedily be released; they shall not die and go down to the Pit, nor shall they lack bread”. In the bowl the word *לְשַׁחַת* is missing. The beginning of the verse,

⁹ See also: Ford, p. 251, JNF 296, line 3; Fain, Ford, Lyavdanský, text I. S-442, line 2, p. 285.

¹⁰ Fain, Ford, Lyavdanský, text II. S-443, ll. 8-9, pp. 288-289.

¹¹ Abousamra, p. 222; Abousamra – Schmidt, p. 156, note 1.

myhr šw'h lhptyh, is written with *matres lectionis* y and w. This is the first time that this verse from Isaiah is quoted on a magic bowl.

syry “bound”. The aphaeresis of *ʾ* in the passive participle of *ʾsr* is not uncommon in magic bowls (see the examples in Ford 2014:243; Ford-Morgenstern, forthcoming, note to HS 3015:6). The same phenomenon is common in forms based on historical I-*ʾ* passive participles in Eastern Neo-Aramaic (see Ford 2014:243, n. 79; Shaked-Ford-Bhayro, forthcoming, note to MS 2053/248:1. See also Fain, Ford, Lyavdansky: Text II. S-443, ll. 8-9, pp. 295-296).

1. 14. *ʾsyr qtyr lhwš ḥtym qmy^o dnn ʾl yd ʾsrgys rbh*: in the parallel formula (MSF, B23, 10) we find: *ʾsyr yn wh̄tymyn (rw̄hyn) mn srgys br brndwk* “May they (the spirits) be bound and sealed from Sergius son of Barandukh”. This name can be either a proper name *ʾsrgys rbh* “Asergi/us the great” or a title *ʾsr gys rbh* “the binder/chief of the great army”. *dʾsr ʾysryn wl̄hwš lyḥšyn wqtr qytryn wh̄tym ḥtymyn*: Compare the similar wording of Montgomery AIT. 5,1; (p. 138), CAIB 10,1 and Cook 1992, 2-3, p. 79. *qytryh l<ʾ> šry wh̄tmyh [ʾ ytr]*: this reading is based on several parallels (IM 62265¹²:2-4; MSF bowl 23,11; BLMJ 03009:10, Editions: Nash B23; CAL 86; Levene 2013:130:¹³ ובִּישְׁמִיָּה דְּגַבְרִיאֵל מְלַאכְהָ דְּאִינִישׁ קִיטְרִיָּה לֹא שְׂרִי וְחַתְמִיָּה לֹא תִבְר).

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¹² Faraj – Moriggi, p. 77.

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« Babel und Bibel ». The Scientific Work of Luigi Cagni

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Résumé. Le colloque « Vingt ans après la mort du Pr. Luigi Cagni, barnabite, assyriologue et hébraïsant de Brescia », tenu au siège de l'Université Catholique à Brescia, nous donne l'opportunité de rappeler ici les grandes lignes des recherches de l'éminent orientaliste italien (1929-1998), qui émergent aussi de son œuvre. Un séminaire d'étude sur le Proche-Orient et la Méditerranée a été mis en place et dédié à sa mémoire, pour poursuivre ses recherches sur la Bible hébraïque dans le contexte historique et culturel dans lequel elle s'est formée et a été transmise.

The Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (UCSC) recently held a commemoration, in its campus in Brescia, of the Barnabite scientist Luigi Cagni, an internationally-famed scholar in Assyriology and Hebrew studies, who was particularly well-known for the conferences he promoted at the Istituto Universitario Orientale (IUO) in Naples on the language of the tablets found in Tell Mardikh/Ebla. Twenty years after his passing, the “Francesco Vattioni” Archive for bibliographical and documentary sources on the Ancient Near East and the “Felice Montagnini” Library, dedicated to historical and philological studies of the Bible, both research centres within the History and Philology Department at UCSC have decided to celebrate the memory of this philologist, historian and archaeologist, whose research spanned from the world of Babylon to the Hebrew Bible. The commemoration consisted in the organization of a conference and in the publication of a collection of writings by colleagues and friends, who retrace the main research paths explored by Cagni (*L'opera di Luigi Cagni: 1929-1998*, a cura di Giancarlo Toloni, Paideia, Torino, 2018), as a sign of continuity and a reminder of his precious scientific teaching.

Cagni was one of the most prestigious names in Italian Oriental Studies. Born in Toline (Brescia) on 4 March 1929, Cagni joined the Clerics Regular of Saint Paul Barnabites at just eleven years old. He then continued on the path of religious formation and after being ordained as a priest, he carried out important duties for the Order's government, ultimately serving as General Vicar. By that time, he had also graduated in *Re Biblica* at the Pontifical Biblical Institute (PBI) and in Classics at the University of Rome "La Sapienza" under the guidance of Giorgio Castellino. Prior to his graduation, he also frequently studied abroad in Heidelberg under Adam Falkenstein and Burkhardt Kienast. He taught History of the Pre-Islamic Near East at the IUO and was later a full professor in Assyriology and Chair of the Asian Studies Department, responsible for the publication of its *Annali*.

The commemorative volume opens with the editor's introduction and a brief note by **Mario Taccolini**, Pro-Rector of UCSC that explains the main aims of the initiative; then, **Filippo Lovison**, the legal representative of the Clerics Regular of Saint Paul Barnabites, traces a religious profile for Cagni. The other essays focus on different aspects of his scientific work, highlighting its original contribution to the research. Finally, the volume includes a biographical note and the full bibliography of all of Cagni's writings curated by the volume's editor.

1. The Scientist and the Man

The commemoration was led by **Simonetta Graziani**, Cagni's first student to graduate under his guidance at IUO, who followed in his teachings, collaborated with him in the study of Sumerian-Akkadian Epigraphy and eventually succeeded him in the full professorship in Assyriology. In her contribution, she highlights several aspects of her professor's work, from his scientific and academic teaching "in Naples and at the *Orientale*" to a more personal portrait of the man she knew.

Cagni started teaching in 1971 as a professor in History of the Pre-Islamic Near East at IUO. Once the chair in Assyriology was es-

tablished (1975), he received the full professorship in 1980. However, the subject had always been part of his courses, since his teachings combined history, philology and historical-religious studies, encompassing Sumerian, Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew. Cagni's courses reflected his vast knowledge in numerous fields, which he perfected during the years he spent studying in Rome and Heidelberg. Thus, he would gradually reconstruct the history of the Ancient Near East in its cultural complexity through the combined use of archaeological, textual, artistic-historical sources and geographical maps, extracts of excavation reports, Sumerian and Akkadian literary texts, Hebrew Bible books, or Assyrian and Hittite royal inscriptions. His dedication to teaching further spurred him to accept the professorship in Biblical and Medieval Hebrew Language and Literature from 1991 to 1998.

His scientific activity was similarly intense. When Cagni arrived in Naples, he had already numerous publications to his name, among others the complete edition of the *Erra Epic* (1969), which he published in a critical edition of the cuneiform text in 1970 and later translated into English in 1977. Cagni was extraordinarily productive: to promote the field of Assyriology in Naples, he would participate in numerous conferences where he was invited as a speaker, while simultaneously taking the lead in organizing many memorable conferences like the three meetings on Ebla held in Naples (1980, 1982 and 1985). These were a testament to his courage, given the quarrel that, at the time, was dividing the international scientific community regarding the ancient Syrian city. In the mid-1970s, Cagni's *curiositas* and scientific intelligence led him to conceive and design his large project on the history and economy of Achaemenid Mesopotamia. The project, which would soon extend to encompass the Neo- and Late-Babylonian periods, was ambitious from the outset, because its aim was the processing—in terms of transliteration, translation, prosopography reconstruction and archival context—of thousands of economic-administrative texts housed in the main European and Non-European museum institutions, which, for the most part, were only available as cuneiform texts, partially edited or even still unpublished. In 1984, Cagni published a synthesis of the issues he had encountered in *History, Administration and Culture of Achaemenid Mesopotamia: Status of Current*

Studies. Yet, the turning point for his research and method was the publication of *Typology and Structure of Mesopotamian Documentation during the Achaemenid Period*, which cemented his already vibrant collaboration with M. A. Dandamaev, M. Stolper, and F. Vallat.

Cagni held many important academic positions; he first managed the *Annali* (1981) and other publications of the Asian Studies Department at IUO, taking over from Giovanni Garbini, and later headed the section on “Mesopotamian Literatures” for *Paideia’s Testi del Vicino Oriente Antico*. Relying on his experience working as a copy editor for *Orientalia* from 1974 to 1978, Cagni took upon himself the complex editing work of the four annual volumes as well as of the corresponding *Supplementi* [appendixes]. In light of his extraordinary productivity and commitment, his reputation in the Neapolitan academic circle grew rapidly; indeed, in 1991 he was unanimously elected Chair of the Asian Studies Department, a position he held until 1997.

Cagni’s multifaceted persona matches his versatile activity; however, the quality that most distinguished him was his great humanity, which arose not only from his own origins but also from his direct interaction with the suffering peoples of Pakistan and his many years serving as priest in the Church of San Carlo ai Catinari in Rome. These experiences led him to make himself available to everyone, from colleagues to students; he would commit his time, listen and pay attention to anyone who was in need, despite his innumerable academic and ecclesiastical commitments, because he would always privilege and prioritize human relationships. Furthermore, thanks to his listening skills, he was naturally inclined towards mediation; he would always seek to learn the causes at the root of a conflict with the purpose of finding a balanced solution, of reaching a pacification, both in his academic and daily life.

2. Assyriology

Francesco V. Pomponio traces the profile of his colleague and friend as an Assyriologist. Cagni’s career in this field started at the Institute of Ancient Near East Studies at the University in Rome, “La Sapienza,” thanks to the encounter with Castellino who, in

1956, succeeded Giuseppe Furlani in the full professorship in Assyriology and Oriental Archaeology, first established in 1940. It was upon his recommendation that Cagni moved to Heidelberg, one of the main centres in the world for the teaching of Assyriology; for the next three years there, he followed the courses taught by Sumerologist Falkenstein. He returned to “La Sapienza” in 1966 and graduated in Classics with a thesis in Assyriology, which consisted of his edition of the *Erra Epic*; after graduation, he started working as an assistant to his professor. His courses in Rome focused on reading and translating official inscriptions and Akkadian literary texts, starting with the first paragraphs of Hammurabi’s Code and the poem of the *Enūma Eliš*. For his seminars, Cagni also published a teaching aid, *Crestomazia accadica* (1971), which included almost 400 pages of transliterations and translations of different categories of Assyrian-Babylonian texts together with a dedicated glossary and a list of logograms; this was to supplement Castellino’s own text *Grammatica accadica introduttiva*.

Cagni continued to teach a seminar at the University of Rome within the discipline of Assyriology during the first year Giovanni Pettinato taught there, after the latter took over from Castellino in 1973, although he had already started in his teaching position at IUO and, from 1973 to 1978, at the PBI in Rome as well, where he worked alongside J. Van Dijk, who taught Sumerian. Together with Van Dijk, Paolo Matthiae and Pettinato, Cagni was one of the organizers of the *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* (RAI) in Rome (1974). In 1976, its proceedings were published: *Études sur le Panthéon systématique et les Panthéons locaux. Compte rendu de la XXXI^e RAI*. Relentless, in 1977-78, Cagni also inaugurated the professorship in Assyriology at the Università di Bologna, which would later be held by Sergio Angelo Picchioni.

His first important work was the *Erra Epic* (1969), an edition of his graduation thesis. It was Falkenstein who first directed Cagni to the study of this poem, which presented an enormous interpretative challenge. The text is yet to be fully reconstructed; it consisted of five tablets of around 700 lines, but only three of them have survived almost in their entirety (I, IV and V), re-assembled from 35 or 36 fragments, which were almost all retrieved from public or private Neo-Assyrian collections (from Assur, Niniveh, and

Sultantepe), with just 2 or 3 manuscripts from Babylon or Ur. Cagni's monograph is the most complete edition of the *Epic*; indeed, his translation was the basis for the one J. Bottéro and S.N. Kramer proposed in their fundamental volume on Mesopotamian mythology, *Lorsque les dieux faisaient l'homme*.

Worth a special mention among Cagni's many works is also the IV volume in the series *Materiali per il Vocabolario Neo-Sumerico* (MVN), where he published the cuneiform copy and the catalogue of 185 administrative tablets belonging to the PBI collection; they date back to the Neo-Sumerian period and originated in Girsu, Nippur, Puzriš-Dagan, and Umma. Another of his contributions can be found in *La Collezione Schollmeyer* by G. Pettinato and H. Waetzoldt, i.e. 265 tablets edited in cuneiform copy (1974), 39 of these were edited by Cagni. Additionally, Cagni was responsible for the editing and collation of hundreds of other tablets from the same period: *Tavoletta economica neo-sumerica di proprietà privata* (1970); *Miscellanea Neo-Sumerica I. Collazioni a G. Reisner, Tempelurkunden aus Telloh* (1974); *Collazioni a N. Schneider, Die Drehem- und Djokha-Texte im Kloster Montserrat* (1983). Fundamental, in this context, was his collaboration with Pettinato for the MVN series, which comprised 22 volumes and thousands of edited cuneiform tablets.

Religion, Sumerian and Babylonian Literature are the focus of most of Cagni's Assyriological essays, where he would privilege cosmogony and anthropogony. Additional important works of a historical-religious nature are the 22 entries in the *Dizionario delle Religioni* by Giovanni Filoramo (1993); the 13 entries in the *Grande Dizionario Enciclopedico UTET* (1985-91) on Sumerian and Assyrian-Babylonian gods; *La religione assiro-babilonese*, in Castellino (ed.), *Storia delle religioni* (1971), and *La religione della Mesopotamia*, in Filoramo (ed.), *Storia delle religioni. I. le religioni antiche* (1994). Turning to a completely different field, volume VIII of the series *Alt-babylonische Briefe in Umschrift und Übersetzung: Briefe aus dem Iraq Museum* (1980) should also be mentioned, which includes the transliteration and translation of 151 Paleo-Babylonian letters of often uncertain and diverse origin.

3. History of the Ancient Near East and Eblaite Studies

Carlo Zaccagnini, who followed Cagni at IUO in the professorship in Ancient Near East History, explores Cagni's contribution to the development of this discipline. He starts out by providing a general framework to understand the teaching of Oriental History within Italian academia in the early seventies, when only one professorship in Ancient Oriental History existed, namely at "La Sapienza." In 1971, a second one was established at IUO, specifically in History of the Pre-Islamic Near East, which Cagni was called to teach from 1971 to 1990.

As a member of Mario Liverani's "Roman School," Zaccagnini was formed by his professor's work, *Introduzione alla Storia dell'Asia anteriore antica*, the first manual on the topic in Italian bibliography, which appeared in the series of teaching materials "Sussidi didattici," designed by Sabatino Moscati. In 1978, Cagni published the first volume of his *Storia del Vicino Oriente preislamico. Il Vicino Oriente dalle origini alla fine del III millennio a.C.*, a "didactic aid for internal circulation," then re-edited in 1991. In 1983, the second volume, *Dal II millennio all'avvento dell'Islam*, came out, written in collaboration with Simonetta Graziani and Grazia Giovinazzo. This volume was also revisited and extended: the second volume—*Il Vicino Oriente nel II millennio a.C.* (1989)—comprised chapters 1-17 and the third—*Il Vicino Oriente dalla fine del II millennio all'avvento dell'Islam* (1990)—chapters 18-25.

What distinguishes his *Storia* is the inclusion of archaeological and artistic-historical records as a supplement to written sources, for the purpose of providing a comprehensive view of the various phases in the history of the Near East. The three volumes dedicated ample space to Egypt and ended with a long chapter on Pre-Islamic Arabia. It was the first time that these documentary sources were taken into consideration in a general historical essay on the History of the Near East.

Five years after Cagni's second volume, Liverani published his book, *Antico Oriente. Storia società economia* (1988), which marked a clear turning point in the popularizing approach to the study of ancient Oriental civilizations. The three volumes of Cagni's new

edition of his *Storia*, published immediately after Liverani's work (in 1989, 1990, and 1991), were receptive of the main novelties the latter had introduced, while maintaining unaltered the original framework as an introductory tool to the understanding of the Pre-Classical Orient. Ultimately, the organic and detailed illustration of three millennia of Near Eastern History represented the premise as well as the supplement to Liverani's own dense synthesis. The fact that Cagni's *Storia* was designed as a "sussidio didattico," a teaching aid, has prevented it from becoming widely known outside of academia. Yet, it still represents a vivid and fertile record of Cagni's teachings in the History of the Ancient Near East for anyone who, for whatever reason, came to own a copy.

Maria Giovanna Biga recounts Cagni's efforts and commitment in organizing the three conferences on Ebla that he convened at IUO, just five years after the discovery of the first tablets (1974) and archives (1975) at the Tell Mardikh/Ebla site in Syria. He wanted to ignite a scientific debate over these texts, which introduced extraordinary novelties in terms of the linguistic, political, cultural, social and religious history of Syria in the IIIrd millennium B.C. The speakers were the most knowledgeable Assyriologists, linguists, Semitists and Sumerian scholars on the languages spoken in Mesopotamia. The proceedings (1981, 1984, and 1987) of these conferences are still essential reading for Eblaite Studies today.

First conference (Naples, 21-23 April 1980): *The Language of Ebla*. Cagni had understood that Assyriologists, philologists, linguists, Semitists and Indo-European scholars were mainly interested in determining what type of language it was. I.J. Gelb suggested ties between Ebla and the *Kish civilization*, which became increasingly evident in the following years. The debate is still ongoing; some believe it to be an Akkadian dialect, while others see it as a new Semitic language, which could perhaps be defined as *Northern Early Semitic*.

Second conference (Naples, 19-22 April 1982): *Bilingualism in Ebla*. Early on, Cagni had identified the problem posed by the numerous logograms found in Ebla's Sumerian texts, which were clearly written by scribes who spoke a Semitic language; thus, he set out to study this written—and not spoken—bilingualism.

Third Conference (Naples, 9-11 October 1985): *Ebla 1975-1985. Ten Years of Linguistic and Philological Studies*. Cagni wanted to convene again most of the speakers of the previous conferences for a first assessment of Eblaite Studies. The essay that triggered an enormous progress in the field of Eblaite Studies was Francesco Pomponio's contribution, which marked the beginning of the chronological classification of Eblaite materials and their systemic placement in the appropriate chronology. The bibliography on Ebla was growing exponentially and, for this reason, Cagni decided to include in the proceedings the bibliography compiled by Pomponio and M. Baldacci. This was the beginning of Eblaite bibliography.

The *in memoriam* volume republishes **Luigi Cagni's** introduction to the third conference, which offers a glimpse in the extraordinary effort he put in its organization and highlights the scientific scope of its relations and discussions, primarily thanks to his disciplined and far-sighted guidance.

4. Semitic Linguistics and Biblical Philology

Riccardo Contini investigates Cagni's contribution to the field of Semitic Linguistics. An expert in Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew, Cagni was not particularly interested in Semitic linguistic comparisons: his main contribution was the organization of the three large international conferences in Naples dedicated to the language of Ebla, together with the sample scrutinizing of lexical and bilingual texts. Although Western Semitic languages were never the direct object of Cagni's investigations, as a versatile Assyriologist with wide-ranging interdisciplinary interests, he always put the historical study of the civilizations that employed these languages at the centre of his research and teaching. It is not surprising that an Assyriologist, especially one who was simultaneously a reputed Biblical scholar, would pay attention to Phoenician, Moabite and especially Aramaic sources; however, the wealth of information Cagni was able to collect on Pre-Islamic Arabia deserves special praise, since it does not have any comparison in any other historic manual on the Ancient Near East.

The reasons behind this overture toward the Southern side of the Semitic world lie in the synergy Cagni shared with his colleagues, who specialized in historical-geographical fields of studies that were somewhat contiguous, particularly Alessandro de Maigret, a prominent scholar in Italian archaeology in Arabia, especially in Yemen. A steadfast advocate of the need to integrate the Arabic peninsula in the study of the Ancient Near East, de Maigret provided first-hand news on the results of research conducted on Ancient Arabia. The more than 70 pages Cagni dedicated to Pre-Islamic Arabia in the second edition of his text on Ancient Near East History bear witness to that collaboration. Thus, he was among the first to broaden the extension of the Ancient (and Middle-to-late) Near East to the Arabic peninsula, a position that was later actively reinforced by his colleagues at IUO, first Garbini and then, predominantly, de Maigret.

The writer of this paper, instead, draws the picture of Cagni as a scholar of the Hebrew Bible. In this field of study, he first emerged as a translator and commentator of *Jeremiah*, *Baruch*, *The Lamentations* and *The Letter of Jeremiah*; he also edited the Latin text of *Job* in *Neo-Vulgata*. For an appropriate assessment of Cagni's contribution to Biblical studies, one needs to consider his efforts to contextualize the Hebrew Bible in the Ancient Near East, thus highlighting the role played by neighbouring cultures in its formation. His sense of humanity and his openness to dialogue stirred him away from taking sides in the discussions dominating among comparatists, tensely divided between those who rejected the authenticity of the Biblical Word, favouring Mesopotamian archetypes, and those who continued to reject, as in the past, any analogy between motives and genres found in the Hebrew Bible and those of surrounding cultures. Such was the legacy of "Panbabylonism," which also formed the basis for Friedrich Delitzsch's positions at the beginning of the XXth century, as presented at the conference *Babel und Bibel*, according to which Biblical stories of Creation and Flood were mere re-writings of traditions originating in Mesopotamia (i.e. the poems *Enūma eliš* and *Gilgameš*). Yet, the new discoveries of Ras Shamra and the literary analysis of the Bible, developed during Vatican II, soon laid bare how simplistic it was to claim Babylon as the sole source for Biblical stories of origins. The

new cultural climate was the inspiration behind Cagni's ability to mediate with caution and balance, as evidenced in *L'uomo secondo la Bibbia a confronto con le culture contemporanee* (1993) and in a review (1992) for *L'Antico Testamento e le culture del tempo*. Promoting the dialogue between Hebrew Bible scholars and Assyriologists, he was keen to avoid any prejudice and extremism, which would have frozen the critical debate, encouraging, instead, to respond wisely to the excitement of new discoveries, without foregoing the best of tradition.

In *L'uomo e il sacro nel mondo prebiblico* (1993), Cagni points out that even in Mesopotamian Theogonies the origin of the world and of man is attributed to the gods, yet there is no trace of a *creatio ex nihilo*: in fact, it was believed that a "creative evolution" led from an undifferentiated universe to the diversification of reality. Clear analogies to the Biblical story of creation seem to indicate a contamination of Sumerian and Akkadian mythology. *Il mito babilonese di Atrahasis* (1975) deals with the Flood as a form of punishment for the human revolt against their destiny, which according to the gods' original plan was to work and replace the gods in agricultural activities (*Creazione e destinazione dell'uomo secondo i Sumeri e gli Assiro-Babilonesi* [1975]). A comparison with the Hebrew Bible (*La destinazione dell'uomo al lavoro secondo Genesi 2 e secondo le fonti sumero-accadiche* [1974]) reveals a clearer theological foundation.

In studying the relationship between the Oriental codes and the Bible (*I codici orientali e la Bibbia* [1969]), Cagni observes that there might exist some proximity between the legal norms of the Hebrew Bible and those of the Oriental codes, which are similarly presented in the conditional. However, Biblical norms are often marked by their apodictic nature. Finally, in *Le profezie di Mari* (1995, now re-edited with a critical update by Simonetta Graziani), Cagni discusses the extra-Biblical origins of Israel's prophecy, studying 52 prophetic texts by Mari, updated in the edition of the *Archives Épistolaires de Mari I/1* by J.-M. Durand. Despite the undisputable analogies, Cagni lists the many differences from the Biblical prophecy, stressing that Mari's prophetism is "practical, utilitarian, 'functional,' devoid of any moral or theological concern, contrary to what distinguishes the Biblical world."

5. Languages and Cultures of the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean

Following these critical premises, the Department of Historical and Philological Studies at UCSC dedicated the Studies Seminar in Languages and Cultures of the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean to the memory of Cagni, aimed at promoting studies on the Hebrew Bible that investigate it within its natural context of formation and transmission. The *Seminar*, which is open to the collaboration of scholars belonging to other universities, will thus coordinate two important research facilities such as the Vattioni Archive and the Montagnini Library, which house the book collections of Cagni's two friends from Brescia, in addition to the personal library of another great Semitist, and friend, Giovanni Garbini, who passed away recently.¹ Hopefully, research in this scientific field will, thus, continue with the same passion and zeal that Luigi Cagni often displayed.

¹ Cf. G. Toloni, « “Biblica et Semitica” : L'œuvre scientifique de Francesco Vattioni », *Semitica* 58, 2016, p. 297-305; Id., « “Linguistica, Epigraphica et Philologica”. The Scientific Work of Giovanni Garbini », *Semitica* 59, 2017, p. 415-423.

Ougarit, depuis déjà 90 ans

Valérie Matoïan

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En 1928, la découverte fortuite d'une tombe construite en pierres de taille à quelques kilomètres au nord de la ville de Lattaquié (Syrie) conduisit à la création d'une mission archéologique ayant la charge d'explorer l'anse maritime de Minet el-Beida (le « port blanc ») et le tell de Ras Shamra (la « colline du fenouil »). Le mardi 2 avril 1929, sous la direction de Claude Schaeffer, commençaient les fouilles régulières sur le premier site. Et environ un mois plus, le 9 mai, débutait l'exploration de Ras Shamra.

L'archéologie proche-orientale connaît alors des développements remarquables. L'ère des pionniers a cédé le pas à une archéologie plus méthodique et de grands sites, tels Byblos, Mari et Ougarit, font l'objet de fouilles régulières. Une contribution à ce volume de la revue *Semitica* présente les points forts de l'évolution de l'archéologie en Syrie de 1919 à 1929, éclairant la période-clé qui prend place juste avant le début des fouilles à Ougarit¹.

Neuf décennies se sont depuis écoulées. La mission archéologique de Ras Shamra – Ougarit, devenue syro-française en 1999, poursuit ses travaux. La valeur à la fois patrimoniale et documentaire des archives produites dans le cadre des activités de cette mission est de premier ordre (fonds Schaeffer du Collège de France, archives de la mission, archives du Département des antiquités orientales du Louvre...) et l'un des axes de recherche prioritaires est leur exploitation scientifique. Comme le montrent déjà de nombreuses publications, l'étude des documents inédits est riche d'enseignements. Les pistes de recherche sont variées. La plupart ont pour vocation d'approfondir nos connaissances sur la civilisation

¹ Voir, dans ce volume, la contribution de Michel al-Maqdissi, « Les fouilles de Ras Shamra-Ougarit dans le contexte de la « question archéologique syrienne » durant la première décennie du mandat français (1919-1929) ».

ougaritique, dans le cadre de programmes structurants sur la géographie sociale et urbaine, le fait religieux, les interactions culturelles en Méditerranée orientale... L'établissement de corpus, en particulier pour les catégories d'objets peu ou pas étudiées jusqu'à présent, est primordial. Dans ce volume, le dossier portant sur les pointes de « flèches à percussion » de Ras Shamra révèle le corpus le plus important du Proche-Orient alors qu'un seul spécimen était à ce jour connu par les publications². D'autres recherches se focalisent sur des *unicum*, inédits ou mal documentés. À chaque fois, ces travaux font appel à l'approche contextuelle qui se fonde sur l'analyse de l'ensemble de la documentation archivistique. La coupe en forme de corolle florale RS 26.318, présentée dans ce volume, est l'une de ces pièces remarquables³, un témoin rare de la vaisselle en serpentinite mis au jour à Ougarit.

Une autre dimension de ce travail est la valorisation d'autres fonds documentaires et patrimoniaux, tels ceux des musées conservant des collections provenant de Ras Shamra et de Minet el-Beida. Au cours des dernières années, les recherches ont apporté des précisions sur le contexte de découverte de certaines œuvres conservées dans les collections du Louvre, augmentant par la même leur valeur documentaire et historique. L'exposition intitulée *Ougarit, une cité méditerranéenne*, qui marque l'actualité du Département des antiquités orientales du musée du Louvre au second semestre 2019 (palais du Louvre, hall Colbert), présente ainsi pour la première fois des pièces statuariques égyptiennes réattribuées au sanctuaire du dieu de l'Orage⁴.

Nombre d'études récentes portent un regard croisé sur les textes et les images. Une autre contribution du volume s'intéresse

² Voir, dans ce volume, la contribution d'Aurélien Carbillet et de Valérie Matoïan, « Les pointes de "flèches à percussion" d'Ougarit ».

³ Voir, dans ce volume, la contribution de Valérie Matoïan et de Bernard Geyer, « La coupe RS 26.318 et la vaisselle en serpentinite d'Ougarit ».

⁴ Exposition organisée dans le cadre d'un partenariat entre le musée du Louvre, le Collège de France et la Mission archéologique syro-française de Ras Shamra – Ougarit. Commissariat : Valérie Matoïan (CNRS, Collège de France) et Marielle Pic (musée du Louvre).

au motif de la femme sur un âne au Proche-Orient ancien, questionnant à la fois les sources ougaritiques et hébraïques⁵. L'approche iconographique bénéficie de la numérisation des archives qui donne accès à des documents de haute définition, telle la photographie de l'empreinte du sceau-cylindre RS 23.003, offrant ainsi une meilleure lisibilité des images.

Les archives se révèlent aussi des documents précieux pour les géographes, qui les exploitent pour mieux comprendre l'évolution des paysages levantins sur le long terme, englobant mais dépassant aussi le temps de la civilisation ougaritique⁶.

D'autres enquêtes enfin portent sur l'histoire de la mission, l'un des chantiers historiques de l'archéologie levantine et, plus largement, sur celle d'une discipline.

⁵ Voir, dans ce volume, la contribution de Corinne Lanoir, « Quand les femmes apparaissent sur des ânes ; de quelques ambassades féminines à Ougarit et dans la Bible hébraïque ».

⁶ Voir, dans ce volume, la contribution de Nicolas Jacob-Rousseau et de Bernard Geyer, « Habitat, bâti et aménagements ruraux dans la plaine de Ras Shamra au début du XX^e siècle ».

Les fouilles de Ras Shamra-Ougarit dans le contexte de la « question archéologique syrienne » durant la première décennie du mandat français (1919-1929)¹

Michel al-Maqdissi

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Abstract. *The excavations carried out at Ras Shamra-Ugarit fit the French archaeological policy in Syria during the Mandate. It is almost the culmination of a decade of activity (1919-1929) organized by the “Service des antiquités” under the authority of René Dussaud. This policy on the “question archéologique syrienne” will be applied in several areas: excavations, museums, restoration of monuments, training of local cadres, publications, and development of laws to organize antiquities. René Dussaud will play a decisive role in creating the bases of this policy and especially organizing the excavations in Syria, including in Ras Shamra.*

Introduction

L'organisation à Marseille au début de 1919 d'un congrès voué à la Syrie posera les grandes lignes de la politique française dans ce

¹ Mes remerciements vont particulièrement à Valérie Matoïan pour ses remarques judicieuses.

pays du Levant². La partie archéologique, qui fut publiée sous la direction de Paul Masson³, regroupe onze communications présentées par Ernest Babelon, Jules Baillet, Paul Casanova, Claudius Chanteur, Arnaud d'Agnel, Eugène Duprat, René Dussaud, Louis Jalabert, Maurice Pillet, Paul-Marie Séjourné et Louis-Hugues Vincent.

E. Babelon présente, lors de la séance de clôture, un plan articulé autour de six recommandations⁴ qui seront le point de départ de l'action menée par l'autorité mandataire avec les deux premiers Hauts-Commissaires : François Georges-Picot et le Général Henri Joseph Eugène Gouraud.

À la recherche d'une politique archéologique syrienne

Durant cette même année, François Georges-Picot tente d'organiser une première opération sur le terrain, dans le cadre d'une équipe restreinte formée de deux militaires chargés d'inspecter les antiquités : le Lieutenant Robert du Mesnil du Buisson et le Sous-Lieutenant Léonce Brossé.

² Ce Congrès s'est tenu les 3, 4 et 5 janvier 1919 avec quatre sections : Section économique ; Section archéologique, historique, géographique et ethnographique ; Section de l'enseignement ; et Section de médecine et d'hygiène publique. Notons que Paul Huvelin (juriste et économiste français, enseignant à la Faculté de droit de l'Université de Lyon, il participe à la fondation de l'École de droit de l'Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth en 1913 et en même temps il conduit en 1919 une mission en Syrie pour évaluer les intérêts français dans la région) jouera un rôle clé dans l'organisation et l'orientation générale du congrès.

³ Masson 1919.

⁴ Babelon 1919 : (1) Publication des actes de l'ensemble des communications présentées pour la section d'archéologie, histoire, géographie et ethnographie du Congrès. (2) Création des musées et bibliothèques dans les principaux centres en Syrie (Damas, Beyrouth et Jérusalem). (3) Création d'une École d'arabe et de sciences musulmanes. (4) Création d'un Service des Antiquités pour organiser la question archéologique syrienne. (5) Organisation périodique d'autres Congrès français sur la Syrie. (6) Demande de restitution pour la Syrie des sarcophages fouillés par O. Hamdi Bey dans la nécropole de Sidon.

En même temps, il demande à un comité d'experts franco-britanniques, composé du Capitaine Raymond Weil, du Capitaine Reginald Engelbach et du Lieutenant Ernest John Henry Mackay, d'inventorier le patrimoine de la partie nord de la côte levantine⁵ et facilite un voyage d'étude de M. Pillet jusqu'à la Cilicie⁶.

Sa décision principale en lien avec la « question archéologique syrienne » restera toutefois l'ordre de mission, en date du 7 novembre 1919⁷, d'envoyer ses deux inspecteurs à Alep et à Damas (Zone A des accords Sykes-Picot) afin d'assurer la passation des consignes sur les antiquités avec les inspecteurs britanniques⁸.

Ce dossier illustre parfaitement l'importance qu'accorde l'autorité française à la nécessité de bien préparer l'emprise et le contrôle de l'administration chérifienne durant une période charnière de l'histoire de la Syrie.

L'arrivée du Général Gouraud à la tête du Haut-Commissariat va apporter une vision combative de l'archéologie. La nomination de l'athénien Joseph Chamonard⁹, durant presque onze mois (janvier-septembre 1920) à la tête d'une équipe chargée de créer un Service des Antiquités, sera cruciale. Dans son rapport publié dans le premier numéro de la revue *Syria* il résume positivement les travaux réalisés durant son séjour au Levant.

⁵ Chamonard 1920 : p. 84-85 ; Chevalier 2002 : p. 283-289 ; Chevalier 2015 : p. 17-18.

⁶ Chevalier 2015.

⁷ Notons que cet ordre de mission, conservé dans les archives de R. du Mesnil du Buisson au Musée du Louvre (DAO 301/011/0007a-b), constitue le plus ancien engagement de l'autorité mandataire en archéologie syrienne.

⁸ Suite à cette mission, R. du Mesnil du Buisson va publier le rapport présenté au Haut-Commissariat et une première réflexion sur l'archéologie syrienne, cf. du Mesnil du Buisson 1919 et du Mesnil du Buisson 1920.

⁹ Il est nommé Conseiller pour l'archéologie et les beaux-arts. Notons que le Général Gouraud a rencontré Joseph Chamonard en 1915 lors de la bataille des Dardanelles où il le chargea d'effectuer la fouille de la nécropole grecque d'Éléonte dans la presqu'île de Gallipoli à quelques centaines de mètres de la ligne de feu avec l'armée ottomane, cf. Chamonard 1920 : p. 81.

Les premières fouilles commencent à partir de 1920 dans plusieurs sites le long de la côte levantine¹⁰ et dans la moyenne vallée de l'Euphrate¹¹.

L'année suivante, cette activité sera renforcée par des actions majeures à Sour-Tyr, sous la direction de Denise le Lasseur¹², à Oumm El-ʿAmed avec Eustache de Lorey, futur directeur de l'Institut de Damas¹³, à Jbeil-Byblos avec l'égyptologue Pierre Montet¹⁴, à Tartous-Tortose par le chartiste Camille Enlart¹⁵ et à Tell Nebi Mend-Qadesh dans la région de la plaine de Homs avec l'archéologue Maurice Pézard assisté par D. le Lasseur et L. Brossé¹⁶.

Suite à ce début sur le terrain réussi, l'autorité du mandat renforce son rôle en matière d'archéologie au travers des cinq actions suivantes :

- Création des musées destinés à conserver les antiquités issues des travaux sur le terrain ou qui se trouvent dans les collections privées ou chez les particuliers.
- Réalisation d'inspections et de campagnes de restauration d'urgence pour les monuments menacés.
- Création d'une plateforme de publication vouée à la diffusion de l'information archéologique sous diverses formes : rapports préliminaires, recherches en cours, synthèses, études finales...
- Organisation d'expositions temporaires d'antiquités.
- Développement d'une série de lois sur les antiquités qui permettent d'adapter la loi ottomane de 1906.

¹⁰ À Sour-Tyr et dans sa région, sous la direction d'Eustache de Lorey accompagné de Denise le Lasseur (Anonymus 1921a : p. 80), à Saida-Sidon, sous la direction de Georges Contenau (Contenau 1923 et 1924) et à Beyrouth, sous la responsabilité de R. du Mesnil du Buisson (du Mesnil du Buisson 1921, 1922 et 1924-1925).

¹¹ À Salihyeh-Doura *Europos*, sous la direction de James Henry Breasted (Breasted 1922a ; Breasted 1922b). Notons qu'à cette époque cette région de la Syrie était sous domination britannique.

¹² le Lasseur 1922.

¹³ Virolleaud 1921 : p. 298. Pour cet institut, cf. Gouraud 1923b.

¹⁴ Cf. par exemple, Montet 1921, 1923, 1928-1929 et Dussaud 1921, 1930.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* En même temps Camille Enlart va étudier l'Abbaye cistercienne de Belmont, cf. Enlart 1923.

¹⁶ Pézard 1921 ; Pézard 1922 ; Pézard 1931.

Cette politique a pour résultat immédiat la création de deux musées, celui de Beyrouth (un premier noyau fut créé en 1918), sous la responsabilité de L. Brossé¹⁷, et celui d'Adana, sous la supervision du Colonel Normand¹⁸. Parallèlement, l'autorité du mandat apporte un appui au musée du site de Jérablus-Karkemish¹⁹ et au musée de Damas, ainsi qu'un soutien pour la mise en fonction du musée de Baalbek²⁰.

À Paris, R. Dussaud engage les milieux archéologiques à fonder la revue *Syria* en 1920²¹ et la collection de la Bibliothèque archéologique et historique en 1921²². Ces deux plateformes éditoriales joueront un rôle crucial dans la diffusion des résultats, des études et des recherches sur la terre syrienne.

Ces projets ambitieux trouveront aussi un écho lors de la Foire-Exposition de Beyrouth d'avril et de mai 1921 avec l'organisation d'une animation archéologique qui sera couronnée par la parution d'une série d'articles dans une publication spécifique préfacée par le Général Gouraud²³.

Cette première phase sera suivie, en 1922, par deux expositions, la première au mois de mars au musée du Louvre²⁴ et la seconde au

¹⁷ Il s'agit du Musée français de l'art antique du Levant qui conserve, entre autres, la collection des jésuites de Beyrouth (cf. Anonymus 1922a).

¹⁸ Normand 1921.

¹⁹ Léonard Woolley était chargé de la création d'un musée du site en plein air autour de la collection des objets (surtout les sculptures, les bas-reliefs, les orthostates...) trouvés durant ses fouilles à Jérablus-Karkemish du site.

²⁰ Ce musée est fondé suite à la visite de l'empereur Guillaume II sur le site en 1898. Cf. d'une manière générale Sader, Scheffler et Neuwirth 1998.

²¹ Périodique fondée par Edmond Pottier, Gaston Migeon et René Dussaud.

²² Collection fondée par René Dussaud et Charles Virolleaud, cf. Anonymus 1921b.

²³ Cf. la publication dans Foire-Exposition de Beyrouth 1921 avec des contributions de Dhorme 1922, Kurd Ali 1922, Lagrange 1922, Prost 1922 et Rabbath 1922.

²⁴ Anonymus 1922b. Il s'agit d'un choix d'objets et de documents graphiques des fouilles de Tyr, Tell Nebi Mend, Sidon et Byblos présentés dans la salle assyrienne du département des Antiquités orientales.

mois de septembre dans le cadre de l'Exposition coloniale nationale de Marseille²⁵. Le Haut-Commissariat accompagne ces deux événements d'un recueil d'articles qui résume les activités archéologiques conduites de 1920 à 1922²⁶.

Quant aux missions d'inspection, les deux inspecteurs attachés au Haut-Commissariat en effectuent de nombreuses, au cours des années 1919 et 1920, le long de la côte levantine particulièrement à Beyrouth, Sidon, Tartous, dans la région du lac de Homs... L'action la plus importante demeure celle qui a été organisée par Fr. Georges-Picot au mois de novembre 1919 afin que les inspecteurs français reçoivent les consignes de leurs collègues anglais²⁷.

Les archives de R. du Mesnil du Buisson renseignent sur presque toutes les étapes de ce dossier, depuis l'ordre de mission jusqu'au passage à Alep, Damas et Baalbek et surtout les discussions avec les deux inspecteurs anglais, Léonard Woolley et Keppel Creswell.

Enfin, l'autorité mandataire aborde, dès 1919, la question de la protection du patrimoine archéologique par la mise à jour des lois sur les antiquités en s'appuyant sur le règlement ottoman du 10 avril 1906²⁸. Dans ce cadre, un certain nombre d'arrêtés sont publiés²⁹ et la loi définitive est publiée le 26 mars 1926³⁰, quelques jours avant la tenue du congrès syro-palestinien³¹.

²⁵ Il s'agit d'une exposition dans le pavillon « Syrie, colonie autonome ». D'une manière générale, cf. Exposition coloniale nationale de Marseille 1922. En plus cf. récemment Morando 2004 : p. 248.

²⁶ Cf. la publication dans Travaux 1920-1922 avec des contributions de Clermont-Ganneau 1923, Cumont 1923, Dussaud 1923, Gouraud 1923a, Naville 1923, Pottier 1923 et Viroilleaud 1923.

²⁷ En effet, comme nous avons déjà signalé, ce dossier qui illustre parfaitement l'insistance de l'autorité mandataire de Beyrouth sur la nécessité de bien préparer l'emprise et le contrôle de l'administration chérifienne à une période délicate pour la question archéologique syrienne.

²⁸ Cf. le texte republié dans Segret 2012 : p. 211-218.

²⁹ Il s'agit de l'arrêté n° 560 en date du 2 août 1919 et de l'arrêté n° 47 en date du 29 janvier 1920, cf. les deux textes dans *ibid.* : p. 218-221.

³⁰ Il s'agit de l'arrêté n° 207, cf. le texte dans *ibid.* : p. 221-228.

³¹ Cf. plus loin.

L'établissement du Service des Antiquités et l'organisation de son action

Après avoir défini les grandes lignes de la politique archéologique, nous devons attendre jusqu'au 17 mars 1926 pour que Ch. Virolleaud soit officiellement nommé directeur du Service des Antiquités³².

Cet événement ne changera pas beaucoup l'activité archéologique sur le terrain puisque les clauses de cette politique resteront les mêmes et que la nouvelle position du directeur est destinée principalement à renforcer son autorité et surtout à le positionner comme l'interlocuteur du directeur du service des Antiquités palestiniennes, au moment de l'organisation du Congrès du mois d'avril 1926.

Nous pouvons souligner ici que l'activité archéologique en Syrie sera soumise à une planification menée conjointement par le Service des Antiquités, le Musée du Louvre et l'Académie des inscriptions et Belles-Lettres et que R. Dussaud sera le cerveau de cette politique³³. Cette position, couplée à sa connaissance approfondie de la Syrie, lui donnera les moyens financiers et intellectuels pour développer une politique ambitieuse qui satisfait les cercles scientifiques français et rend à l'archéologie syrienne sa position prestigieuse au Levant, entre l'Égypte, la Méditerranée orientale d'un côté et le bassin mésopotamien de l'autre.

Mais l'événement scientifique le plus important durant cette première décennie du mandat demeure l'organisation, du 8 au 26 avril 1926, entre Beyrouth et Jérusalem, d'un congrès archéologique sur la Syrie et la Palestine³⁴. Cet événement fut réalisé conjointement par Ch. Virolleaud et John Garstang³⁵.

Soulignons le rôle fondamental joué par deux institutions françaises dans la réussite de cette manifestation. Ce fut d'abord, à

³² Il s'agit de l'arrêté n° 190, cf. Anonymus 1926 : p. 186.

³³ Sa présence en même temps au Musée du Louvre, à l'Académie et à la direction de la revue *Syria*, lui a permis de prendre les décisions quant à l'orientation de la politique archéologique.

³⁴ Cf. d'une manière générale Virolleaud 1925 ; Contenau 1926 ; Dhorme 1926.

³⁵ Alors directeur du Service des Antiquités en Palestine.

Beyrouth, la présentation aux congressistes faite par le R. P. Louis Cheikho de la riche collection de manuscrits de la bibliothèque orientale au couvent des pères Jésuites à l'Université Saint-Joseph. Puis, à Jérusalem, l'accueil chaleureux du R. P. Édouard Dhorme³⁶ à l'École biblique et archéologique installée au couvent Saint-Etienne.

De plus, R. Dussaud prononce au nom de la délégation française, à Beyrouth et à Jérusalem, deux discours qui rappellent solennellement l'engagement profond de la France et de l'Académie pour l'archéologie syrienne et palestinienne³⁷.

Les résultats de ce congrès vont renforcer les grandes lignes de la politique archéologique française en Syrie avec, en particulier, l'augmentation des actions sur le terrain à Palmyre, Neirab, Doura Europos, Arslan Tash, Tell Ahmar et plus tard à Hama, Baalbek, Apamée, Antioche, Meskéné et au Crac des Chevaliers³⁸.

René Dussaud et son rôle incontournable

Comme nous l'avons déjà signalé, les bases de la politique archéologique française seront révélées dès l'apparition du premier numéro de la revue *Syria* en 1920. R. Dussaud précise avec les deux autres fondateurs :

« de toutes les terres d'Orient, la Syrie est celle avec laquelle la France a entretenu les rapports les plus intimes et les plus continus. Il n'est pas une époque, même la plus reculée de l'antiquité syrienne, qui n'ait pour nous un intérêt direct »³⁹.

³⁶ Édouard Dhorme était le directeur de cette École et en même temps le secrétaire général du Congrès.

³⁷ Cf. Dhorme 1926 : p. 425 et un extrait de son discours de Jérusalem dans Contenau 1926 : p. 266-267.

³⁸ Cf. pour l'ensemble des activités le tableau publié dans Gelin 2002 : p. 58-63.

³⁹ Pottier, Migeon et Dussaud 1920 : p. 1.

Par la suite, il insiste :

« notre programme se résume en deux phrases : développer en Syrie le goût de l'art et des antiquités du pays ; mieux faire connaître au dehors les arts syriens de toutes les époques. La revue *Syria* doit servir de trait d'union entre l'intellectualité française et l'élite syrienne en leur fournissant l'occasion d'une collaboration féconde. Nous seconderons de tous nos moyens les groupements locaux, tels que la Société Syrienne d'Art et d'Archéologie, actuellement en formation »⁴⁰.

L'esprit d'ouverture de ce grand humaniste va marquer l'action française en Syrie durant toute la période du mandat. D'ailleurs, R. Dussaud exprime son attachement au développement des institutions locales et surtout à la formation des jeunes cadres levantins. Dans un article publié en 1929, il indique :

« dès maintenant il existe deux musées locaux importants, l'un à Damas que conserve l'émir Djafar Abd-el-Kader, ancien élève de l'École du Louvre, et celui de Beyrouth confié à l'émir Maurice Chéhab, formé à la même École. Un troisième musée pourrait s'ouvrir immédiatement si un local lui était attribué, c'est celui d'Alep »⁴¹.

Dans ce même article, il résume les acquis de cette première décennie et souligne :

« on n'exagère donc pas en concluant que les dix dernières années de fouilles en Syrie nous ont restitué deux mille ans d'histoire et il est juste de rendre hommage à ceux qui s'y sont employés. Un récent voyage en Syrie, en Iraq et en Anatolie nous permet de nous en acquitter en connaissance de cause »⁴².

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* : p. 2.

⁴¹ Dussaud 1929a : p. 588-589.

⁴² *Ibid.* : p. 589-590.

Ras Shamra, chantier pionnier de l'archéologie syrienne durant la deuxième décennie du mandat

Cette conclusion magistrale ne s'arrêtera pas à ces réalisations, R. Dussaud annoncera les premiers résultats de l'exploration à Ras Shamra. Pour lui une page méconnue de l'archéologie syrienne sera révélée cette fois-ci à l'extrémité septentrionale de la côte orientale de la Méditerranée dans une région charnière du Levant.

Les échos des découvertes de la première campagne pousseront R. Dussaud à formuler une introduction audacieuse pour le grand public parisien où il révèle dans un style clair et direct que :

« Cette région côtière, qui s'étend entre Tripoli et Lataquié, ne tardera pas à reprendre l'importance qu'elle a eue dans l'antiquité et que les recherches entreprises ce printemps mettent en évidence.

Il s'agit des fouilles que conduisent avec un plein succès MM. F.-A. Schaeffer, conservateur-adjoint au Musée préhistorique de Strasbourg, et Chenet ; le préhistorien bien connu de l'Argonne, sur le site de Minet-el-Beida, port naturel à 11 km au nord de Lataquié, et sur le tell voisin nommé Ras Shamra. Il y avait là, à l'époque mycénienne, une colonie chypriote remarquablement active, par l'intermédiaire de laquelle les Chypriotes de la seconde moitié du II^e millénaire introduisaient sur le continent asiatique les produits de la mer Égée et même de l'Égypte. De ce point, la vallée du Nahr-el-Kébir (du nord) pénètre dans l'intérieur et permet de gagner soit Alep et l'Assyrie, soit la vallée de l'Oronte vers Hama et Homs. Les produits orientaux prenaient le chemin inverse pour gagner Chypre et l'Égée.

La découverte fortuite, due à un paysan, d'une tombe en pierres taillées, voûtée en encorbellement, a attiré l'attention sur Minet-el-Beida. Un propriétaire des environs, grand amateur d'antiquités, M. Bruno Michel, d'une famille française installée de longue date à Lataquié, en fut le premier informé et en saisit M. Schaeffer, l'actif et distingué gouverneur de l'État des Alaouites qui alerta, à son tour, M. Viorolleaud, directeur du Service des Antiquités. Avec le concours de l'État des Alaouites et celui de l'Académie des Inscriptions, une mission fut organisée et confiée à MM. Schaeffer et Chenet. Les premiers résultats sont fort encourageants : la nécropole cypro-mycénienne de

Minet el-Beida s'est révélée fort riche et la ville voisine a fourni des textes cunéiformes »⁴³.

Ainsi, nous devons souligner clairement le rôle central de R. Dussaud dans les fouilles et les recherches à Ras Shamra.

R. Dussaud a toujours essayé de rechercher les origines anciennes de l'art syrien⁴⁴ dans les grands courants artistiques du deuxième millénaire av. J.-C. Pour lui, l'existence d'un style syrien doit être révélée par l'intensification des travaux au Levant septentrional, le long de la côte orientale de la Méditerranée et en Syrie intérieure.

De ce point de vue, il suivra avec impatience les résultats des travaux archéologiques réalisés par Pierre Montet à Jbeil-Byblos et soutiendra, à partir de 1924, les fouilles de Robert du Mesnil du Buisson sur le site de Mishirfeh-Qatna dans l'Emèse orientale.

Pour R. Dussaud, cette région regroupe :

« une série de monuments, sculptures en ronde bosse ou bronze, bas-reliefs, cylindres gravés, plaquette d'ivoire, céramique — celle que Mishrife a révélée — qui nous donnent sur l'art syrien du deuxième millénaire des indications très nettes, art vigoureux qui s'est formé à l'école babylonienne, y a puisé la plupart de ses motifs, mais a acquis des qualités propres qui lui ont valu une réelle personnalité. Il était entièrement constitué quand les Hittites sont descendus en Syrie et ont occupé la région septentrionale de ce pays. Dès le début du 'Syrien récent', il disparaît, cédant la place à l'art composite qu'on a retrouvé à Karkemish, Zendjirli et Saktshé Geuzu »⁴⁵.

Il défendra cette pensée nouvelle et profonde tout au long de sa carrière et recherchera toujours des authentiques données pour appuyer ses réflexions. L'occasion se présentera lorsqu'il recevra au début de 1929 des documents (graphiques et objets) résultant du travail de Léon Albanèse à Minet el-Beida⁴⁶ (**fig. 1**).

⁴³ *Ibid.* : p. 595-596.

⁴⁴ Cf. par exemple Dussaud 1937.

⁴⁵ Dussaud 1926 : p. 346.

⁴⁶ Cf. en particulier, Albanèse 1929 et Al-Maqdissi 2019.

Pour lui, Ras Shamra est situé dans un emplacement géographique idéal pour résoudre les problèmes et les propositions qu'il a adoptées dans ses recherches (**fig. 2**). Ainsi, il va directement intervenir pour soutenir la création d'une mission régulière qui sera l'aboutissement de sa politique archéologique syrienne et celle du Service des Antiquités.

Conclusion

L'ensemble des recherches sur les racines anciennes de l'art syrien publiées dans *Syria* s'intègre parfaitement dans cette politique conçue à partir de la pensée de R. Dussaud⁴⁷. Les fouilles de Ras Shamra-Ougarit marqueront l'aboutissement de cette pensée après une décennie de recherches françaises en Syrie.

L'année 1929 est donc une date cruciale pour les recherches au Proche-Orient. R. Dussaud pense même que « la pénétration intellectuelle réciproque de l'Occident et du Proche Orient est entrée dans une voie décisive »⁴⁸.

Cette détermination à dévoiler des pages obscures d'une histoire ancienne (**fig. 3-4**) sera suivie par l'autorité archéologique jusqu'à la fin du mandat. R. Dussaud rappelle en 1953 que les travaux pratiqués en Syrie et particulièrement à Ras Shamra :

« depuis une trentaine d'années ont complètement transformé les données historiques admises jusque-là ; elles ont mis en honneur le rôle éminent joué par les populations arabo-syriennes, rôle qui a abouti à susciter sur leur sol les trois principales religions monothéistes. Cette vocation remonte aux Cananéens, si injustement décriés, qui avaient atteint de bonne heure un remarquable développement religieux et moral que résumera cette citation d'un texte de Ras Shamra (V AB, E, 38-39) : Ta parole, (ô) El, est sagesse (*hkm*)/(et) ta sagesse (est fonction) de (ta) vue éternelle »⁴⁹.

⁴⁷ Pour le rôle joué par R. Dussaud, cf. Bounni 2008 et Chevalier 2008.

⁴⁸ Dussaud 1929a : p. 603.

⁴⁹ Dussaud 1953 : p. 7-8.

Cher maître, nous avons su garder votre message à l'occasion des cinquantième⁵⁰ et soixante-quinzième anniversaires des fouilles de Ras Shamra-Ougarit⁵¹. Actuellement, nous commémorons le quatre-vingt-dixième anniversaire dans un exil loin du site, entouré par des archives soigneusement conservées au Collège de France et au Musée du Louvre, grâce aux efforts appliqués par la mission.

Nous travaillons avec détermination pour que la gloire de nos ancêtres soit révélée car, quelle que soit la nature actuelle de notre archéologie et les ruptures qu'elle nous propose, notre action restera la même avec la même source d'inspiration. En effet, nous sommes les dépositaires de vos travaux et les gardiens de vos idées aux souvenirs d'un passé brillant qui illumine notre goût du présent et qui sera notre guide pour les prémices de l'avenir.

Abréviations

AAS	Annales Archéologiques de Syrie.
BAH	Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique.
BSFFA	Bulletin de la Société Française des Fouilles Archéologiques.
BSHAO	Bulletin de la Société Historique et Archéologique de l'Orne.
BSNAF	Bulletin de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France.
BTS	Beiruter Texte und Studien.
CRAI	Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres.
DAS	Documents d'Archéologie Syrienne.
RB	Revue Biblique.
RSO	Ras Shamra-Ougarit.

⁵⁰ Cf. particulièrement le colloque organisé à Lattaquié du 10 au 13 octobre 1976, dont les actes sont publiés dans un numéro spécial des AAS, XXIX-XXX, 1979-1980.

⁵¹ Al-Maqdissi 2004.

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Fig. 1 : Minet el-Beida 1928, Entrée du premier tombeau fouillé par Léon Albanèse (d'après Albanèse 1929, pl. III/2).

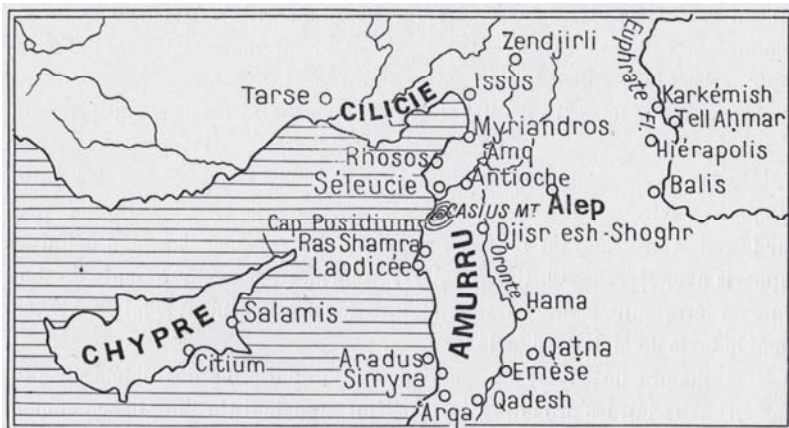


Fig. 2 : Ras Shamra, Carte avec la localisation du site par rapport à la Méditerranée orientale et la Syrie du nord (d'après Dussaud 1929b, p. 297/fig. 6).



Fig. 3 : Ras Shamra 1929, Vue d'ensemble de la partie haute (acropole) du site (d'après Schaeffer 1929, pl. LIX/1).

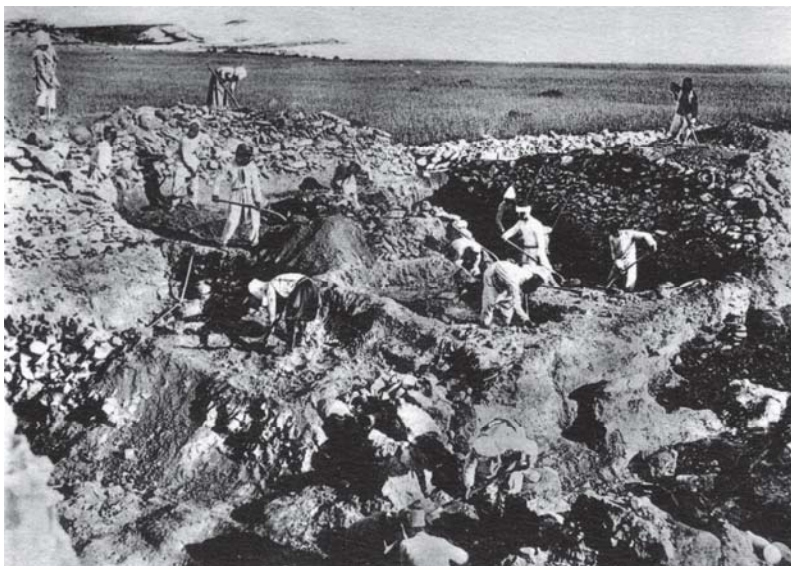


Fig. 4 : Ras Shamra 1929, Fouilles de la nécropole du Bronze moyen entre les deux temples de Ba'al et de Dagan (d'après Schaeffer 1929, pl. LI/1).

Les pointes de « flèches à percussion » d'Ougarit

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Abstract. In 2007 Hermann Genz drew our attention to a category of bronze objects characteristic of the Late Bronze Age. These objects are commonly interpreted as arrow tips of a particular type, called “stunning bolts” or “flèches à percussion”. The authors publish for the first time a corpus of these objects in the Near East and in Eastern Mediterranean according to the publications, in which is included the only published specimen of Ugarit (Ugaritica IV). A study of the Mission archéologique syro-française de Ras Shamra – Ougarit archives allows us to add 29 unpublished specimens from the Ras Shamra excavations. This article presents the Ugaritian corpus, the most important of the Near East. The results of the contextualizing approach support Genz’s hypothesis of an association of these objects with the elite, but indicate a preferential association with domestic and palatial contexts rather than tombs as shown by Egyptian, Cypriot, Central and Southern Levant discoveries. Until now, Ugaritic documentation (archaeological, archaeozoological, textual and iconographic) does not provide sufficiently clear clues to decide between the various hypotheses discussed by the authors concerning the function of these objects: jet weapons associated with bird hunting or tools?

Dans un article publié en 2007, H. Genz s’intéresse à une catégorie de petits objets en bronze communément interprétés comme des pointes de flèche d’un type particulier, appelé « stunning bolts » ou « flèches à percussion ». Il établit pour la première fois un corpus de ces objets au Proche-Orient et en Méditerranée orientale d’après les publications, dans lequel est inclus un spécimen d’Ougarit (**fig. 1**).

Notre intérêt pour cette catégorie d’objet est corrélé au projet de publication du mobilier inédit du secteur de fouille de Ras Shamra appelé « Ville Sud ». Initié par la Mission, ce programme s’inscrit dans les opérations en cours visant à préciser la géographie urbaine et sociale d’Ougarit, axe de recherche qui constitue l’un

des enjeux des études portant sur la civilisation ougaritique. Notre recherche a permis l'identification de trois exemplaires inédits (RS 23.135, RS 23.151, RS 23.325) provenant de ce secteur de la ville, répertoriés dans les inventaires des trouvailles et dans les notes de fouille. Cette catégorie de mobilier n'ayant jamais fait l'objet d'une attention particulière, livrer une première présentation du corpus nous est apparue comme indispensable¹.

En élargissant notre recherche à l'ensemble de la documentation archivistique relative aux sites de Ras Shamra et Minet el-Beida (tous secteurs de fouille confondus), ce sont au total 30 exemplaires qui ont été répertoriés. Tous proviennent du tell de Ras Shamra. Dans les inventaires, ces objets sont enregistrés sous les termes « flèche-percuteur » ou « flèche à percussion »², sauf dans un cas (n° 6), où les fouilleurs l'interprètent comme un outil.

Ougarit possède ainsi le corpus le plus important du Proche-Orient. Il est supérieur à celui de Bogazköy qui compte 18 exemplaires répertoriés d'après les publications. Une première présentation en est faite dans le cadre de cet article. Comme nous le verrons, la valeur documentaire des informations dont nous disposons pour ces objets est variable, en raison de la nature même des archives de fouille de la mission archéologique d'Ougarit, ce qui rend délicate toute interprétation. Jusqu'à présent méconnue de la communauté scientifique, nous avons toutefois jugé nécessaire de livrer cette documentation.

¹ Sur les programmes en cours dans le cadre de la Mission, voir Matoïan 2016 pour l'établissement systématique de corpus de mobilier. Pour des corpus établis récemment, voir Blanc 2017 (rhytons coniques) ; Carbillet 2016 et 2017a (appliques murales) ; Matoïan 2015 (supports), Matoïan et Vita (2019). Des recherches en cours portent sur la vaisselle en pierre, les kernoï, la vaisselle zoomorphe, les figurines de terre cuite (Carbillet 2017b), les stèles (Bessac et Matoïan 2019), les massues (Dalix et Matoïan 2019), les scarabées, la glyptique (Cluzan 2017).

² On notera que ce terme n'apparaît dans les inventaires qu'à partir de la 12^e campagne de fouille. Cela pourrait-il indiquer qu'avant cette date, ce type particulier de bronze n'avait pas retenu l'attention des fouilleurs ? Nous ne disposons pas, à ce jour, de données nous permettant de confirmer ou non cette hypothèse.

L'étude d'Hermann Genz

L'auteur prend comme point de départ l'étude typologique de W. McLeod (1982) portant sur les arcs et les flèches découverts dans la tombe de Toutankhamon. H. Genz reconnaît dans la catégorie des flèches appelée « bullet-shaped tip » par W. McLeod³, celle des « stunning bolts » identifiée dans la documentation proche-orientale. La publication de W. McLeod les décrit ainsi : « *the head swells to its maximum diameter in the front half; in front of the maximum diameter it tapers conically; the end is sometimes cut off flat, sometimes it is rounded, occasionally it is almost pointed; attached to the foreshaft by a tang* ». Sous cette appellation, W. McLeod regroupe des pointes de flèche qui, bien que possédant une caractéristique morphologique commune [une tête dont le diamètre maximal est situé à son extrémité active (opposée à la soie)], présentent plusieurs variantes : à extrémité active plate, arrondie ou pointue. Cette catégorie de pointes de flèche comprend plus de quatre-vingts spécimens. Cependant, l'ensemble n'est illustré dans la publication que par les photographies de quatre d'entre eux⁴.

H. Genz, qui interprète ces objets comme des armes de jet associées à la chasse aux oiseaux, recense 185 exemplaires dont l'aire de répartition comprend la Turquie, le Kurdistan, la Syrie, le Liban, la Palestine, la Jordanie, Chypre, et l'Égypte⁵, le plus grand nombre de sites étant localisé au Levant Sud. Le catalogue ne comprend qu'une seule découverte pour Ougarit comme nous l'avons déjà précisé, non référencée par un numéro d'inventaire RS (n° 15). Cette pièce correspond effectivement au seul spécimen publié lorsque H. Genz a effectué son recensement⁶.

D'après ce catalogue, les objets mesurent entre 3,4 et 8 cm, avec peu d'exemplaires dont la longueur est supérieure à 6,5 cm. Ils présentent une soie généralement en forme de tige de section carrée, plus rarement circulaire ou losangique. La forme et la longueur de

³ McLeod 1982, p. 59, n° 68-74.

⁴ McLeod 1982, pl. IV, n° 68, n° 69, n° 72 et pl. V, n° 71.

⁵ En Égypte, des flèches « à percussion » à terminaison conique fabriquées en bois sont connues depuis la période archaïque jusqu'au Nouvel Empire (Clark *et al.* 1974, fig. 9, type D2 ; McLeod 1982, n° 57, p. 17-18, 59, pl. V).

⁶ Schaeffer 1962, p. 74, fig. 61g ; Genz 2007, n° 16.1, p. 63, fig. 7.

leur tête sont variables : tête conique à extrémité pointue, conique à extrémité plate, oblongue, piriforme, cylindrique, avec dans quelques cas, à la base de la tête un évasement plus ou moins prononcé⁷.

Actualisation du catalogue

Notre travail permet d'ajouter au corpus de Genz 44 exemplaires supplémentaires dont 29 inédits issus des fouilles de Ras Shamra auxquels viennent s'ajouter des spécimens de Bogazköy⁸, Qatna⁹, Gezer¹⁰, Beth Shean¹¹, Hazor¹² publiés récemment. Le corpus comprend à présent près de 230 entrées (**tab. 1**). Ces « pointes de flèche » sont fabriquées en bronze, excepté un exemplaire en argent mis au jour dans la tombe royale de Qatna¹³. Les occurrences en métal semblent n'exister qu'au Bronze récent (Bronze récent II de la chronologie sud-levantine) (cf. note 3).

Ces objets connaissent une large diffusion : mise à part l'Égypte (où l'effectif le plus important provient de la tombe thébaine de Toutankhamon qui a livré plus de 83 exemplaires), on en retrouve au Levant Sud, au Levant Nord, en Mésopotamie, en Anatolie centrale et à Chypre (**fig. 2**).

Description du corpus ougaritain

Nous présentons le corpus sous la forme d'un catalogue des découvertes (**tab. 2**), établi à partir de la documentation dont nous disposons dans les archives de la mission¹⁴ : inventaires des trouvailles

⁷ Genz 2007, n° 21.1, 21.4, 21.12, 21.13, 21.16.

⁸ Schachner 2017, p. 235, fig. 219:a, c.

⁹ Al-Rawi 2015, p. 351-352, fig. 9-10.

¹⁰ Gilmour 2014, n° 929, p. 101, pl. 42:12.

¹¹ Yahalom-Mack 2009, cat. n° 19-22, p. 568-569, fig. 10.3.

¹² Cimadevilla 2017, p. 639, fig. 18.1:15.

¹³ Al-Rawi 2015, p. 351, fig. 9c.

¹⁴ Il s'agit d'une part du fonds Schaeffer du Collège de France et d'autre part des archives postérieures gérées par la Mission.

(depuis la première campagne de 1929), planches de dessins, photographies, avec l'aide des notes de fouilles et des plans pour la contextualisation. L'exploitation des archives de fouille est un travail en cours et de longue haleine vues la richesse et la diversité de la documentation, mais aussi les difficultés de déchiffrement de certaines écritures (celle de Schaeffer notamment), de recollement des objets et de leur documentation, de vérifications, etc. Le corpus présenté ici n'est donc pas figé, il est au contraire susceptible d'être augmenté au gré des travaux/recherches en cours et à venir (cf. note 2).

La documentation ougaritique dont nous disposons pour ces pointes de flèche se révèle assez inégale. Les descriptions sont succinctes et seules 15 d'entre elles sont complétées par une illustration : croquis, dessin ou photographie (RS 12.74 ; RS 15.413 ; RS 17.221 ; RS 18.259 ; RS 20.310 ; RS 59 ; RS 23.135 ; RS 23.151 ; RS 23.325 ; RS 26.12 ; RS 26.13 ; RS 26.66 ; RS 29.13 ; RS 29.49 ; RS 34.217).

Aucun spécimen n'a été retrouvé en situation fonctionnelle.

Sur la base de cette documentation graphique, les pointes de flèche dites « à percussion » mises au jour à Ougarit semblent former un groupe relativement homogène caractérisé par une tête à l'extrémité plate (**fig. 3 à 5**). Ces « pointes de flèche » à extrémité active plate d'Ougarit s'apparentent aux exemplaires égyptiens regroupés sous les n° 71 et 72 (peut-être également le n° 70) dans le catalogue de W. McLeod (1982) représentés par 32 spécimens.

À Ougarit, les exemplaires retrouvés mesurent entre 3,5 et 6,8 cm de long, le diamètre de la tête varie entre 0,6 et 1,7 cm. Nous disposons de mesures pour la tige pour 3 spécimens uniquement : RS 26.12, 29.49 et 34.217.

Au sein de l'ensemble des 15 pièces illustrées, trois types principaux peuvent être individualisés, avec, pour le type 1, deux variantes. Seul RS 12.74 n'a pu être classé en raison de la qualité du document photographique à notre disposition.

Type 1 : à tête tronconique

Type 1-A :

Les exemplaires de ce type présentent une tête allongée tronconique : n° 6, n° 12, n° 25, n° 27.

Parallèles : Hors d'Ougarit, ce type est bien diffusé sur d'autres sites du Levant Nord (Alalakh, cf. Genz 2007, cat. n° 17.2, 17.4 ; Hama, cf. Genz 2007, cat. n° 15.1 ; Tell Mishrifé/Qatna, cf. Al-Rawi 2015, p. 351, fig. 9a, b, c). On le rencontre également au Levant Sud (Tel Dan, cf. Genz 2007, cat. n° 12.1, 12.2 ; Megiddo, cf. Genz 2007, cat. n° 9.9, 9.13 ; Tell el-Ajjul, cf. Genz 2007, cat. n° 4.8).

Type 1-B :

La tête tronconique est plus ramassée : n° 14, n° 15, n° 22, n° 23.

Parallèles : Ce type est rarement attesté hors d'Ougarit. Il trouve des parallèles avec des exemplaires mis au jour au Levant Sud (Megiddo, cf. Genz 2007, cat. n° 9.1 à 9.3, 9.10 ; Beth Shean, cf. Genz 2007, cat. n° 8.1, 8.2, 8.5 ; Yahalom-Mack 2009, cat. n° 19-21, fig. 10.3, p. 568), et en Anatolie centrale (Bogazköy, cf. Genz 2007, cat. n° 21.2).

Type 2 : à tête conique

La tête, de forme conique, est munie à sa base d'un évasement (bourrelet) plus ou moins prononcé : n° 16, n° 21, n° 29, n° 30.

Parallèles : Un seul parallèle est à ce jour documenté parmi les découvertes de Bogazköy (Genz 2007, cat. n° 21.1). Le site a livré d'autres pointes de flèches dites « à percussion » présentant un bourrelet/annelet à la base de la tête mais la forme générale de la tête diffère des exemplaires d'Ougarit (Genz 2007, cat. n° 21.4, 21.12 à 21.16).

Type 3 : à tête cylindrique

La tête est de forme cylindrique : n° 26 et n° 28.

Parallèles : Il s'agit probablement du type le plus attesté hors d'Ougarit. On retrouve des exemplaires semblables en Égypte (Tell el-Amarna, cf. Genz 2007, cat. n° 2.1), au Levant Sud (par ex. à Tell el-Ajjul, cf. Genz 2007, cat. n° 4.2, 4.4 ; Tel Jedur, cf. Genz 2007, cat. n° 6.1, Beth Shean, cf. Genz 2007, cat. n° 8.4, Akko, cf. Genz 2007, cat. n° 11.1 ; etc.), au Levant Nord (par ex. à Kamid el-Loz, cf. Genz 2007, cat. n° 14.1, 14.5-14.10 ; Alalakh, cf. Genz 2007, cat. n° 17.3 ; etc.), à Chypre (Hala Sultan Tekké, cf. Genz 2007, cat. n° 22.1), en Anatolie (Bogazköy, cf. Genz 2007, cat. n° 21.3, 21.8, 21.10).

Les contextes

Les conclusions d'Hermann Genz

Selon l'étude d'H. Genz, la majorité des 185 « pointes de flèche » qu'il a identifiées proviennent de tombes¹⁵ dont la plupart sont qualifiées de « riches » (par ex. la tombe 387 à Tel Dan, le « trésor » de Kamid el-Loz actuellement identifié comme la tombe de la famille royale de Kumidi). L'auteur indique dans son catalogue les autres contextes (aire sacrée, habitat, toutefois la majorité des objets sont indiqués comme provenant de locus, de niveaux ou de strates sans que ne soit précisé le contexte), mais ne les commente pas dans son étude. Concernant l'unique exemplaire publié d'Ougarit, il indique que l'objet provient d'un « settlement », sans préciser qu'il s'agit du Palais royal, alors même que les contextes palatiaux semblent exceptionnels.

H. Genz souligne aussi que ces objets sont fréquemment associés à des pointes de flèche en forme de feuille (« leaf-shaped arrowheads »)¹⁶.

¹⁵ Genz 2007, p. 50 avance le chiffre de 132 spécimens mis au jour dans des tombes mais son catalogue en dénombre seulement 115.

¹⁶ Genz 2007, p. 50.

Discussion

Ces « pointes de flèche » sont majoritairement découvertes dans les régions du Levant Nord et du Levant Sud, dans des proportions similaires (55 exemplaires pour le Levant Nord ; 64 exemplaires pour le Levant Sud), elles sont plus rarement attestées dans les autres régions (Chypre, Mésopotamie et Anatolie centrale).

Le constat selon lequel ces objets proviennent majoritairement de tombes, avancé par H. Genz, doit être nuancé. Sur les 229 entrées du catalogue, 136 proviennent effectivement de tombes : 83 spécimens ont été mis au jour dans la tombe de Toutankhamon, les 53 exemplaires restants se répartissent dans 18 tombes, certaines sépultures ayant livré entre 6 et 10 exemplaires (« trésor » de Kamid el-Loz, tombe 912B de Megiddo, tombe 387 de Tel Dan). Et si les contextes funéraires sont majoritaires au Levant Sud et à Chypre, ces objets sont associés principalement à des contextes non-funéraires au Levant Nord, en Mésopotamie et en Anatolie centrale.

Parmi eux, 5 exemplaires ont été retrouvés dans un lieu en lien avec des pratiques cultuelles ou rituelles (Tell Nami, Tell Açana, Bogazköy).

À Ugarit, 29 des 30 exemplaires répertoriés ont été découverts en contexte d'habitat (domestique ou palatial). Une seule tombe a livré un seul exemplaire (RS. 20.405 mis au jour dans la Tombe 1 [208], voir *infra*).

Les contextes ougaritains

D'après notre recensement, seuls quatre secteurs du tell ont à ce jour livré des pointes de « flèche à percussion » : 11 (peut-être 13) proviennent du Palais royal, 9 du « Quartier résidentiel » ou « égéen », 3 (peut-être 4) de la tranchée « Ville Sud », 3 de la tranchée « Sud-Acropole ». On ne note aucune concentration.

Aucun exemplaire n'a semble-t-il été mis au jour à Minet el-Beida ; ce constat est toutefois peut-être à nuancer dans la mesure où aucune pointe de « flèche à percussion » n'est signalée dans les inventaires des premières campagnes de fouille au cours desquelles prit place l'exploration de Minet el-Beida (cf. note 2).

Il n'est pour l'instant pas possible de contextualiser plus précisément les exemplaires mis au jour dans la tranchée « Sud-Acropole » car ce quartier de la ville n'a pas encore fait l'objet d'une analyse architecturale poussée qui, comme le travail réalisé par O. Callot (1994) pour la tranchée « Ville Sud », permettrait d'individualiser les ensembles architecturaux (bâtiments, maisons...).

La Tombe 1 [208], mise au jour dans le secteur de la forteresse à l'ouest du Palais royal, est la seule sépulture d'Ougarit dans laquelle fut retrouvée une « flèche à percussion » (RS 20.405). Pillée dans l'antiquité, cette tombe n'a restitué que peu d'objets. Toutes les pièces, mentionnées dans l'inventaire ou signalées dans les notes de fouille et les rapports préliminaires, appartiennent à la catégorie des produits de luxe : fragments de céramiques mycéniennes et de vases en albâtre, plusieurs pyxides en ivoire dont l'une présente un décor sculpté figuré¹⁷, un baquet en bronze, et une bague exceptionnelle (RS 20.410) dont l'anneau, en os ou en ivoire, est creusé d'une cavité centrale remplie d'une pâte noire (probablement du bitume), dans laquelle sont incrustées des pastilles de verre, circulaires ou parallélipipédiques, de couleur jaune, verte, brunâtre et blanche. Comme nous l'avons déjà signalé, la cargaison de l'épave d'Uluburun a livré une série de vingt-huit bagues du même type, mais façonnées dans des coquilles, dont plusieurs présentent les restes d'un décor similaire à celui de l'anneau d'Ougarit¹⁸.

La richesse de l'assemblage permet d'établir un parallèle avec les sépultures d'Égypte ou du Levant signalées précédemment.

Les découvertes de la « Ville Sud » proviennent de trois bâtiments différents :

- La maison A de l'îlot VI, locus 10 (RS 23.135) : du même locus provient un poids en stéatite (RS 23.94).
- La maison F de l'îlot XIII, locus 41 (RS 23.151) : du même locus provient un aiguisoir en grès (RS 23.200).
- Du locus 15 de l'îlot XIV (RS 23.325), qui forme un espace indépendant dans l'îlot (Callot 1994, p. 86 et 94). La pointe de flèche est la seule découverte de ce locus. L'îlot n'a livré aucune autre pointe de flèche.

¹⁷ Gachet-Bizollon 2007, cat. 75, 76, 77.

¹⁸ Matoïan 2013, p. 313-314, fig. 4 ; pl. III, 3.

Seule la maison A de l'îlot VI a livré dans un *locus* (7) contigu au *locus* 10 une autre pointe de flèche en forme de feuille (RS 23.182, pt. 2781).

Le « Quartier résidentiel » ou « égéen »¹⁹ :

- « Maison au portique » ou « maison au porche à colonnes » (RS 21.158) : 1 (ou 2 ?20) pointe(s) de « flèches à percussion » provient de cette maison (*locus* 32). La maison a livré quatre pointes de flèches : RS 21.141 (*locus* 31), Louvre 84 AO 734 (*locus* 33), deux exemplaires sans numéro d'inventaire (*locus* 39).
- « Maison aux albâtres », pièce BD (RS 34.217) : la pointe de « flèche à percussion » provient de la pièce la plus riche de la maison qui a notamment livré plus de soixante-dix vases de fabrication locale, mycénienne et égyptienne, des objets précieux en métal et en pierre, des statuettes (en stéatite et en bronze), etc.²¹ La fouille de cette maison a par ailleurs livré un nombre indéterminé de pointes de flèche qui, d'après les observations des fouilleurs, se rencontrent à l'intérieur du bâtiment, le long des façades occidentale et méridionale avec une plus grande fréquence vers l'angle Sud de la maison.
- « Maison de Rapanou », *locus* 31 (RS 20.310) : quatre pointes de flèches ont été mises au jour dans cette maison (RS 20.314, RS 20.317 et RS 20.318 dans le *locus* 29 ; sans numéro d'inventaire dans le *locus* 35) ; deux autres encore (RS 21.216 A et RS 21.216 B) proviennent de la tombe (tombe VI B [305]).
- Maison B de l'îlot central, *locus* 10 (RS 17.221) : deux pointes de flèches (RS 17.221, *locus* 10 ; sans numéro d'inventaire, *locus* 13) ont été retrouvées dans cette maison dont une associée à RS 17.221.

¹⁹ Pour la localisation des maisons dans ce secteur, voir Yon 1997, p. 75, fig. 36 et l'analyse plus récente d'O. Callot (Matoïan *et al.* 2013, p. 459, fig. 26).

²⁰ Il existe un doute sur la localisation de la pointe RS 29.49 dans ce secteur : *locus* 31 (maison C) ? ou *locus* 26 (maison B) ? ou *locus* 27 (maison B) ? Voir Mantoux 1996.

²¹ Lagarce 1974, p. 8.

- Maison C de l'îlot central, loci 22 (RS 21.130) et 34 (sans numéro d'inventaire) : une pointe de flèche a été découverte dans cette maison (RS 17.306, locus 35).

Les pointes de « flèche à percussion » d'Ougarit sont bien souvent des découvertes isolées au sein des édifices où elles ont été recueillies. Elles ne sont par ailleurs pas systématiquement associées à d'autres types de pointes de flèches. Seuls la « Maison aux albâtres » et le Palais font ici figure d'exception. Les fouilleurs mettent en relation la multitude de pointes de flèches découvertes à l'intérieur de la « Maison aux albâtres » avec une attaque qui aurait déclenché l'incendie ayant détruit l'édifice²². Quant au Palais, il constitue le secteur du tell ayant livré le plus grand nombre de pointes de flèches, tous types confondus. V. Matoïan²³ a recensé 200 pointes de flèches dans les inventaires des campagnes de 1951 et 1952. On relève par exemple des concentrations dans le *locus* 153 (« ex-cour V »)²⁴, dans la partie nord-est du *locus* 20, autour du pt. 146 (plus d'une soixantaine d'exemplaires).

Notons enfin que ces pointes de flèches sont retrouvées dans de riches demeures de la Ville (« Rapanou », « Maison aux albâtres », « Maison au portique »). Les contextes de découvertes ougaritains (Palais, demeures d'élite, tombe riche) soutiennent ainsi l'hypothèse énoncée par H. Genz d'une association de cette catégorie d'objets à l'aristocratie proche-orientale.

²² Lagarce 1974, p. 10.

²³ Matoïan 2008b, p. 48.

²⁴ Au numéro d'inventaire RS 18.259 sont associées 27 pointes de flèches en bronze, identifiées par leur point topographique. Dans cette liste figure notamment le pt. 1420 qui, d'après une planche de dessins retrouvée dans les archives, correspond à une flèche à percussion (cat. n° 14).

Analyse fonctionnelle : armes ou outils ?

Les données archéologiques

À l'exception de quelques pièces de Beth Shean et de Pella qui ont fait l'objet d'analyses métallographiques, peu de données sont disponibles sur le mode de fabrication des pointes de « flèche à percussion »²⁵. Quant à leur analyse fonctionnelle, elle a donné lieu à diverses hypothèses. Plusieurs auteurs les associent à la chasse aux oiseaux²⁶. Tirées à grande vitesse, elles causeraient des blessures internes ou assommeraient le volatile. D'autres chercheurs les considèrent plutôt comme des outils (poinçons, clous, marteaux ou encore petites enclumes)²⁷. Plus récemment, M. Cimadevilla a proposé d'interpréter un exemplaire de Hazor comme une pointe dont se servaient les archers lors de leur entraînement²⁸, reprenant une idée avancée par H. Genz²⁹. L'auteur associe la chasse aux oiseaux à la pratique de l'arc sur un char, méthode idéale d'entraînement afin de préparer les conducteurs de char aux conditions des combats réels. Il suggère que la chasse aux oiseaux était sans doute aussi perçue comme un loisir approprié de la classe supérieure, comme devait l'être en Égypte la chasse aux oiseaux pratiquée à l'aide d'un bâton lancé.

Leur découverte dans les tombes de certaines élites, voire dans des tombes royales (Qatna), et le fait qu'au moins un exemplaire ait été fabriqué en argent, un matériau noble, suggèrent que ces

²⁵ Des analyses isotopiques (isotope du plomb) sur deux pointes de « flèche à percussion » de Beth-Shean et sur les exemplaires de Pella ont permis de mettre en lumière l'origine du métal utilisé pour produire ces objets. Pour les exemplaires de Beth Shean : Turquie ou Grèce pour l'une d'elle et Arabie pour la seconde (cf. Yahalom-Mack et Segal 2009) ; pour ceux de Pella : Monts Taurus en Turquie (cf. Philip, Clogg et Dungworth 2003, p. 90).

²⁶ Clark *et al.* 1974, p. 355-356 ; Genz 2007, p. 49 ; Ben-Dov 2002, p. 126 ; Philip, Clogg et Dungworth 2003, p. 90 ; Al-Rawi 2015, p. 351.

²⁷ Genz 2007, p. 49 fait le point sur cette question et donne les références bibliographiques.

²⁸ Cimadevilla 2017, p. 639.

²⁹ Genz 2007, p. 52.

« pointes de flèches » avaient une fonction spécifique et pouvaient faire partie des armes de prestige³⁰.

La documentation ougaritique (archéologique, textuelle et iconographique) ne livre pas d'indices suffisamment clairs pour trancher entre ces différentes hypothèses. Nous n'avons pas repéré d'association des pointes de « flèche à percussion » de Ras Shamra avec des outils liés aux activités de sculpteur, d'orfèvre, de métallurgiste... Seule a été reconnue la découverte, au sein d'un même bâtiment, de « flèches à percussion » et de flèches en forme de feuille de laurier.

Les données archéozoologiques

L'étude réalisée par E. Vila, à partir d'un échantillonnage significatif de restes fauniques, a montré que l'activité cynégétique ne jouait aucun rôle particulier dans l'alimentation des habitants d'Ougarit³¹ et que les Ougaritains ne semblent pas avoir chassé les oiseaux³².

La documentation textuelle

Arcs, flèches et carquois font partie de l'équipement des soldats et sont mentionnés dans les textes administratifs, parfois en lien avec des chars (RS 15.034)³³. Toutefois, seuls les textes littéraires (mythes et légendes) font référence à la chasse à l'arc (cf. notamment la légende de Danel et Aqhat dont le passage sur la fabrication d'un arc par le dieu Kothar-Hasis³⁴). Le gibier sauvage chassé est représenté principalement par des mammifères.

Dans les textes rituels d'Ougarit, les oiseaux figurent au nombre des offrandes faites aux divinités (les volatiles sont identifiés par

³⁰ Al-Rawi 2015, p. 352.

³¹ Vila 2008, p. 178.

³² Vila 2004.

³³ Vita 1995 ; Vita et Matoïan 2008.

³⁴ Caquot, Sznycer et Herdner 1974, p. 431. Voir aussi Husser 2007.

différents noms³⁵). Cependant, ils ne représentent qu'une faible part de celles-ci³⁶. Ces textes, qui sont avant tout prescriptifs, indiquent le type d'offrande(s) offert à telle(s) divinité(s) mais ne livrent pas d'information sur le mode d'acquisition des offrandes. Seul un passage d'un texte littéraire — le poème mythologique RS 2.002 appelé « la naissance des dieux gracieux et bons » — fait référence à une chasse à l'oiseau accomplie par El (*ʾIlu*)³⁷ :

« *ʾIlu* prépare sa verge, de sa droite son bâton. (L')ayant levé, il tire vers les cieux. Il (le) plume, le met sur le(s) charbon(s) ardent(s) »³⁸

L'iconographie

Des représentations de chasse au gibier à plume à l'aide d'un arc sont connues en Égypte. L'arc semble réservé à la chasse aux autruches. Une seule exception dans l'iconographie égyptienne apparaît sur le naos doré de la tombe de Toutankhamon où l'on voit une chasse aux oiseaux en vol³⁹. Il s'agit chaque fois de flèches qui transpercent la proie, aucune représentation de chasse aux oiseaux avec des flèches à percussion n'est répertoriée dans l'iconographie égyptienne. La documentation proche-orientale est pareillement très pauvre. La seule représentation connue d'une scène de chasse à l'arc aux oiseaux apparaît sur un relief assyrien du palais de Sargon II (721-705 av.) à Khorsabad⁴⁰. Les flèches utilisées transpercent la proie et ne l'assomment pas.

³⁵ Pardee 2000 : une mention de l'offrande d'« oie-*išm* » (p. 1024) ; une mention d'une offrande « oiseau-*ygb* (?) » (p. 1032) ; 9 mentions de l'offrande d'une colombe *ynt* (p. 1032) ; 8 mentions de l'offrande d'une colombe *ynt qrt* (p. 1032) ; 7 mentions de l'offrande de l'« oiseau-*t* » (p. 1043) ; 85 mentions de l'offrande d'un oiseau *ʾsr* (p. 1043-1044) ; 2 mentions d'offrande d'une tourterelle (p. 1047).

³⁶ 3 % du total brut selon Pardee 2000, p. 918. 7 termes sont répertoriés par l'auteur comme faisant référence à des oiseaux.

³⁷ L'interprétation de ce passage fait l'objet de discussions, cf. notamment Minunno 2013, p. 82-83.

³⁸ Traduction donnée par Bordreuil et Pardee 2004, p. 28-29, lignes 37-39.

³⁹ Müller et Thiem 1998, fig. 407.

⁴⁰ Collon 1983, pl. XVII, c.

Dès l'époque d'Uruk, des objets s'apparentant à des flèches à percussion sont cependant connus dans l'iconographie, mais ils apparaissent toujours sous la forme de pièces de grandes dimensions (très différents des bronzes dont il est question ici). Pour D. Collon, il s'agirait de flèches en silex à tranchant transversal destinées à couper plutôt qu'à percer⁴¹.

On trouve, dans le répertoire iconographique d'Ougarit, des représentations de flèches et de nombreuses scènes figurant un archer. La glyptique offre la documentation la plus riche⁴². Lorsque la pointe de flèche est suffisamment détaillée, elle est de forme triangulaire⁴³.

L'archer est le plus souvent figuré bandant son arc à pied⁴⁴ ou en char⁴⁵. Deux scènes le montrent assis⁴⁶. Dans l'une d'elles⁴⁷, l'archer fait directement référence à la figure du pharaon coiffé du casque bleu.

⁴¹ Collon 2008, p. 95 et fig. 2,3 et 5. Pour une représentation dans le monde égéen, sur un cachet de Mallia d'époque protopalatiale, voir Hiller 2003 p. 413, fig. 16b.

⁴² Des représentations sont également connues dans la statuaire [stèles RS 23.216, RS 23.217, RS 24.434 (cf. Yon 1991)] et dans l'ivoirerie (panneau de lit en ivoire RS 16.56 + RS 28.31 : Gachet-Bizollon 2001, fig. 16 et 28

⁴³ Amiet 1992, n° 301, 302, 308, 318, 320, 327, 334.

⁴⁴ RS 4.078 (Amiet 1992, n° 106, p. 54) ; RS 6.022 (Amiet 1992, n° 334, p. 140) ; RS 6.214 (Amiet 1992, n° 168, p. 74-75) ; RS 7.145 (Amiet 1992, n° 340, p. 140) ; RS 8.324 (Amiet 1992, n° 323, p. 138) ; RS 9.027 (Amiet 1992, n° 336, p. 140) ; RS 9.051 (Amiet 1992, n° 318, p. 138) ; RS 19.198 (Amiet 1992, n° 320, p. 138) ; RS 21.08 (Amiet 1992, n° 316, p. 137) ; RS 22.239 (Amiet 1992, n° 329, p. 139) ; RS 25.147 (Amiet 1992, n° 322, p. 138) ; RS 26.226 (Amiet 1992, n° 337, p. 140) ; RS 29.108 (Amiet 1992, n° 338, p. 140) ; RS 30.286 (Amiet 1992, n° 321, p. 138). On signalera également la découverte à Ougarit d'un sceau-cylindre considéré par P. Amiet comme un sceau hittite dont le décor montre une « figure royale » avec un arc placé dans son dos : RS 23.004 (Amiet 1992, n° 181, p. 76).

⁴⁵ MB 4.021 (Amiet 1992, n° 302, p. 131) ; RS 6.355 (Amiet 1992, n° 314, p. 133) ; RS 8.325 (Amiet 1992, n° 309, p. 132) ; RS 19.190 (Amiet 1992, n° 301, p. 131) ; RS 23.407 (Amiet 1992, n° 308, p. 132) ; RS 24.356 (Amiet 1992, n° 311, p. 132-133) ; RS 29.113 (Amiet 1992, n° 305, p. 132).

⁴⁶ RS 3.041 = AO 14811 (Amiet 1992, n° 92, p. 53) ; RS 9.187 (Amiet 1992, n° 108, p. 54-55).

⁴⁷ RS 3.041 = AO 14811, Amiet 1992, n° 92, p. 53.

Des compositions avec représentations d'archer peuvent être interprétées comme des scènes de chasse⁴⁸. Caprinés et félins sont le gibier de choix. Dans quelques cas, l'archer est associé à un oiseau (voire deux) : RS 4.021⁴⁹ ; RS 6.135⁵⁰ ; RS 7.145⁵¹ ; RS 9.027⁵² ; RS 30.286⁵³. En raison du caractère souvent schématique de ces représentations, de l'absence de textes associés et dans l'attente d'une étude plus approfondie de ce thème iconographique, les interpréter comme une chasse à l'oiseau⁵⁴ reste délicat. L'hypothèse d'un lien avec la pratique de la fauconnerie est une piste de recherche qui mériterait d'être développée pour certaines⁵⁵.

On signalera aussi l'existence, dans le domaine de la glyptique, de quelques représentations pouvant être interprétées comme des scènes de capture d'oiseaux⁵⁶.

Conclusion

L'étude publiée par Hermann Genz en 2007 a permis d'attirer l'attention sur une catégorie d'objets en bronze caractéristique de la période du Bronze récent qui n'avait pas été jusqu'alors étudiée dans une perspective régionale. Notre travail livre aujourd'hui à la communauté scientifique le corpus des pointes de « flèche à percussion » d'Ougarit et montre qu'il est le plus important du Proche-Orient alors que seul un spécimen était connu des publications. Une des « spécificités » du corpus ougaritain est son association préférentielle avec des contextes d'habitat et non avec des tombes comme le montrent les découvertes égyptiennes, chypriotes, du

⁴⁸ Par exemple, Amiet 1992, n° 316, 318, 320, 329.

⁴⁹ Amiet 1992, n° 302, p. 131.

⁵⁰ Amiet 1992, n° 314, p. 133.

⁵¹ Amiet 1992, n° 340, p. 140.

⁵² Amiet 1992, n° 336, p. 140.

⁵³ Amiet 1992, n° 321, p. 138.

⁵⁴ Cf. la proposition de P. Amiet pour RS 30.286 (1992, n° 321, p. 138).

⁵⁵ Cf. Les études iconographiques sur la fauconnerie dans l'iconographie hittite : Canby 2002 ; Collins 2004.

⁵⁶ Capture d'autruche RS 23.403, cf. Matoïan 2008a, p. 111 ; représentations d'oiseaux à côté d'un motif de treillis (= filet ?) : RS 9.117, RS 23.424, RS 25.153, RS 27.063, RS 27.067, cf. Schaeffer-Forrer 1983, p. 77.

Levant central et sud. Notre recherche, fondée sur l'exploitation des archives de fouilles inédites de la Mission, devra se poursuivre selon différents axes :

- L'étude directe des objets (qui pourrait être complétée par une analyse métallographique) et leur mise en perspective avec d'autres catégories de matériel dans l'optique de préciser leur mode d'utilisation et leur fonction qui demeurent jusqu'à présent énigmatiques.
- L'étude contextuelle élargie à l'ensemble des pointes de flèche retrouvées à Ougarit (établissement du corpus, d'une typologie, etc), mais aussi à toutes les catégories d'objet pouvant être liées à des activités artisanales.

En raison de l'ampleur de la documentation (en grande partie inédite), cette approche dépasse largement le cadre de l'article. Une première étape portera sur les secteurs de la ville qui font déjà l'objet des programmes de recherche pluridisciplinaires : la « Ville Sud » (voir *supra*) et le secteur palatial, contexte qui a livré le plus de pointes de flèche.

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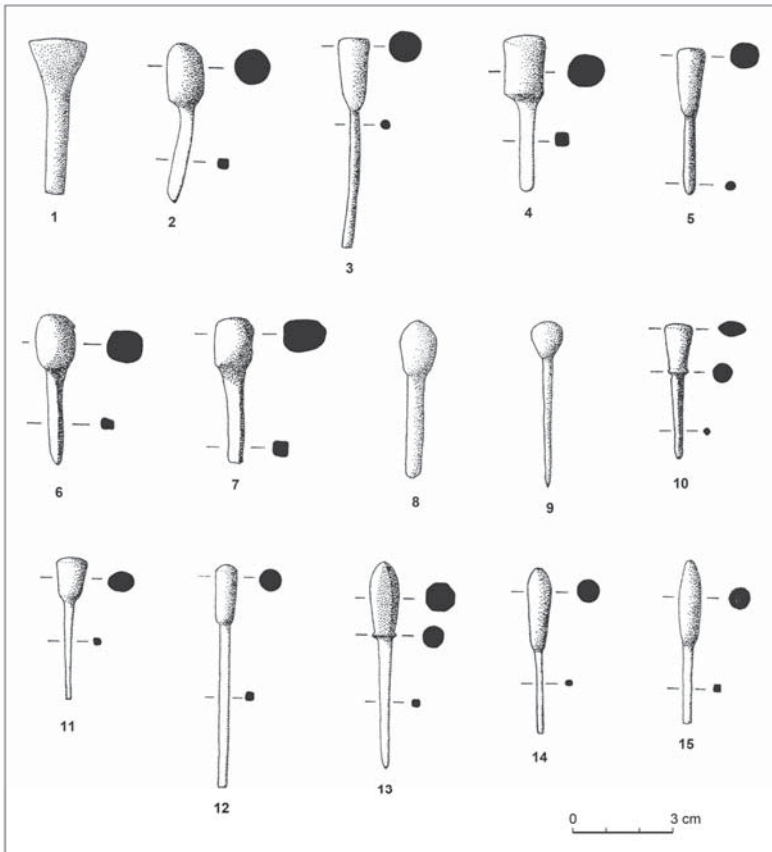


Fig. 1. Pointes de « flèches à percussion » 1. Ras Shamra - Ougarit / 2-5. Tell Açana / 6-7. Tell Munbaqa / 8. Nuzi / 9. Korucutepe / 10-15. Bogazköy (d'après Genz 2007, fig. 7, infographie G. Devilder)

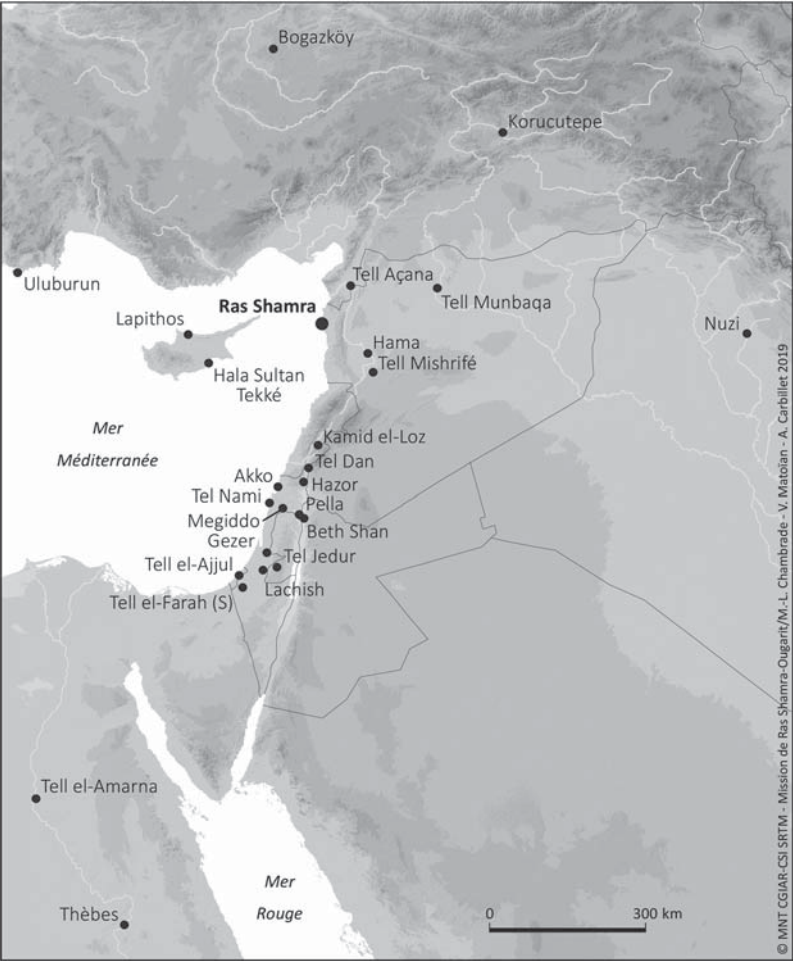


Fig. 2. Carte de distribution des « pointes de flèches à percussion » (Mission de Ras Shamra, M.-L. Chambrade, V. Matoïan, A. Carbillet 2019).

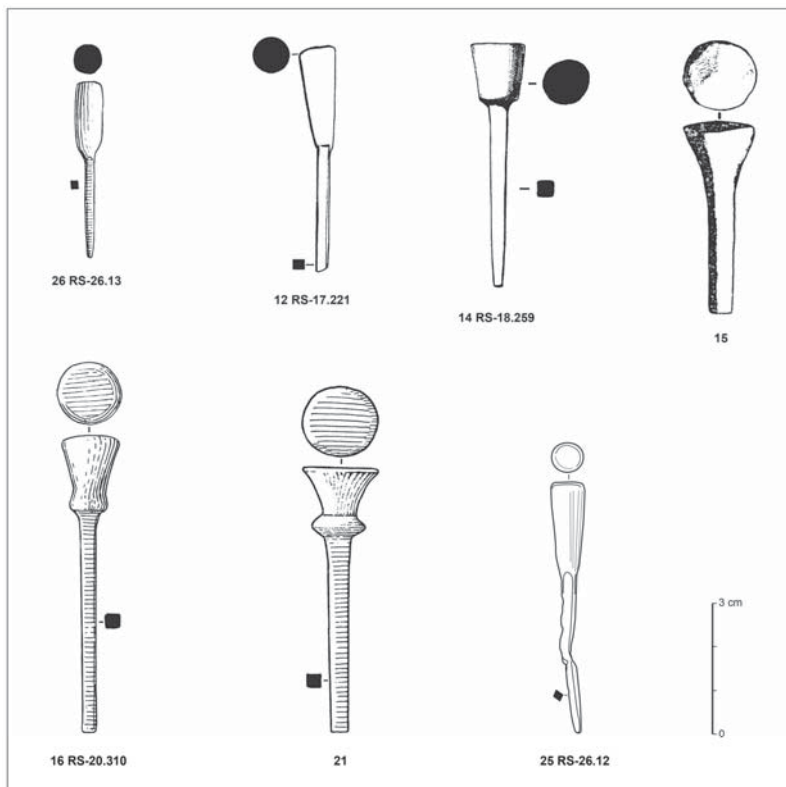


Fig. 3. Dessins de sept pointes de « flèche à percussion » d'Ougarit (Mission de Ras Shamra, infographie G. Devilder et V. Matoïan).

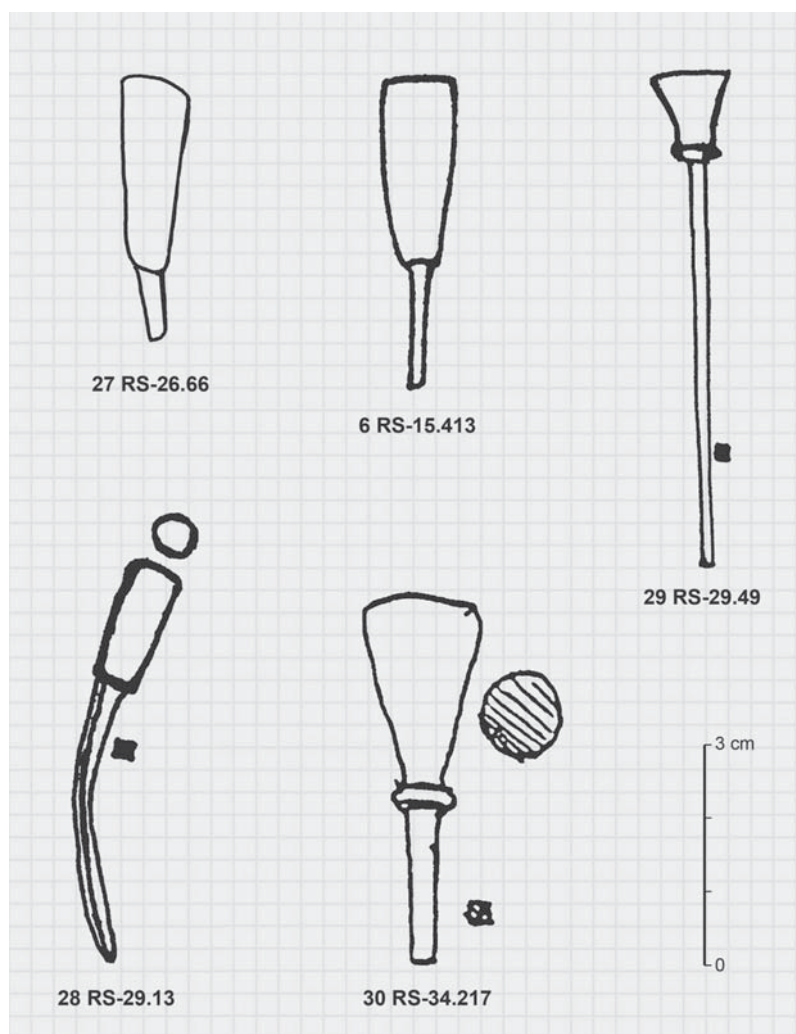


Fig. 4. Croquis de cinq pointes de « fl che   percussion » d'Ougarit d'apr s les inventaires de la mission (Mission de Ras Shamra, infographie G. Devilder et V. Matoian).



*Fig. 5. Photographies de deux pointes de « flèche à percussion » d'Ougarit
(Mission de Ras Shamra, infographie G. Devilder et V. Matoïan).*

RÉGION	Site	Nombre d'items
ÉGYPTÉ	Tell el-Amarna	2
	Thèbes	+ de 83
	Provenance inconnue	2
ANATOLIE	Bogazköy	18
	Korucutepe	1
	Uluburun	1
CHYPRE	Lapithos	1
	Hala Sultan Tekké	1
LEVANT NORD	Tell Açana/Alalakh	4
	Tell Munbaqa	2
	Ras Shamra/Ougarit	30
	Hama	1
	Tell Mishrifé/Qatna	7
	Kamid el-Loz	11
LEVANT SUD	Tel Dan	6
	Hazor	1
	Akko	1
	Tel Nami	1
	Megiddo	17
	Pella	3
	Beth Shan	9
	Gezer	11
	Tel Jedur	1
	Lachish	3
	Tell el-Ajjul	9
	Tell el-Farah (S)	2
MÉSOPOTAMIE	Nuzi	1
TOTAL		229

Tab. 1. Répartition par régions des découvertes de « pointes de flèche à percussion ».

N° cat	N° RS	Description d'après les archives de fouilles	Type	Dims en cm (L. x D. tête)	Provenance d'après les archives	Localisation & bibliographie
1	12.44	Flèche-percuteur en bronze		5 x 1	TST 2 2,10 m de prof. « près du piquet 1,5 »	Entrée du Palais royal ?
2	12.74	Flèche-percuteur	?	5 x 0,9	TST 3 1,50 m de profondeur ou « piquet 1,5, prof. 2,70 m, dans porte sud derrière antichambre »	Palais royal, passage entre locus 1 et locus 6
3	14.64	Flèche à percussion		3,9 x 1	Pt. 39 1,05 m de prof.	Palais royal, Cour I ?
4	14.98	Flèche percuteur		4 x 0,8	Pt. 120	Palais royal, locus 38
5	14.273	Flèche de percussion		5 x 1	Pt. 108	Palais royal, espace entre locus 1 et locus 6
6	15.413	Pointe d'outil en bronze	1.A	4,2 x 1,5	Pt. 39	Secteur du Palais royal ?
7	16.37	Flèche à percussion		6 x 1	Pt. 258 3,30 m de prof.	Palais royal, passage entre locus 71 et locus 72
8	16.89	Flèche à percussion		5,6 x 0,8	Pt. 292 3,55 m de prof.	Palais royal, locus 34
9	16.97	Flèche à percussion		4,9 x 0,8	Pt. 329 4,45 m de prof.	Palais royal, locus 11
10	16.214 (=16.362)	Flèche de percussion		3,7 x 1	Pt. 482 0,10 m de prof.	Palais royal, Cour III, partie nord
11	16.306	Flèche à percussion		3,5 x 0,7	Pt. 534 1,70 m de prof.	Palais royal, Cour III, partie nord
12	17.221	Flèche à percussion	1.A	5,1	Pt. 994 2,10 m de prof.	« Quartier résidentiel » ou « égéen », îlot central, maison B, locus 10 Mantoux 1996, p. 37 et p. 123
13	Sans n° RS, 17 ^e campagne	Pointe de flèche à percussion en bronze			Pt. 1102 1,80 m de prof.	« Quartier résidentiel » ou « égéen », îlot central, maison D, locus 34 Mantoux 1996, p. 52 et p. 123
14	18.259		1.B	5,85 x 1,3 (mesures d'après le dessin)	Pt. 1420	Palais royal, « ex-cour V » (locus 153)
15	Sans n° RS, 18 ^e campagne	Flèche en bronze du type à percussion	1.B	4	Pt. 1460	Palais royal, « ex-cour V » (locus 153) Schaeffer 1962, p. 99 et p. 74, fig. 61c ; Genz 2007, cat. 16.1, p. 63, fig. 7

Tab. 2.1. Le corpus des « pointes de flèche à percussion » d'Ougarit (première partie).

N� cat	N� RS	Description d'apr�s les archives de fouilles	Type	Dims en cm (L. x D. t�te)	Provenance d'apr�s les archives	Localisation & bibliographie
16	20.310	Fl�che � percussion en bronze	2	6,8	Pt. 1906 0,30 m de prof.	« Quartier �g�en », �lot est, « Maison de Rapanou », locus 31 Mantoux 1996, p. 96 et p. 125
17	20.328	Fl�che � percussion en bronze		4,5	Pt. 1751 1,10 m de prof.	« Quartier �g�en », �lot central, Maison D, locus 37 Mantoux 1996, p. 53 et p. 124
18	20.405	Fl�che � percussion		4	RS 49, Tombe 1	« Forteresse », Tombe 1 [208] Marchegay 1999, p. 392
19	21.130	Fl�che � percussion		4,7 x 0,7	Pt. 2075 1,50 m de prof.	« Quartier �g�en », �lot central, Maison C, locus 22 Mantoux 1996, p. 48 et p. 126
20	21.158	Fl�che � percussion		3,7	Pt. 2094 2 m de prof.	« Quartier �g�en », �lot ouest, « Maison au portique » ou « Maison au porche � colonnes », locus 32 Mantoux 1996, p. 21 et p. 126
21	RS 59		2	6 x 1,7 (mesures d'apr�s le dessin)		Ville Sud ?
22	23.135	Fl�che � percussion en bronze	1.B	4,8 x 1,4	Sous Pt. 2738 1,50 m de prof. Z.35 W	Ville Sud, �lot VI, maison A, locus 10
23	23.151	Fl�che � percussion en bronze	1.B	5,1 x 1,2	Pt. 2821 1,90 m de prof. Z.9 E	Ville Sud, �lot XIII, maison F, locus 41
24	23.325	Fl�che � percussion en bronze	1.A	4 x 0,8	Pt. 3249 1,30 m de prof. Z.204 E	Ville Sud, �lot XIV, locus 15 Callot 1994, Appendice I, p. 225
25	26.12	Fl�che � percussion en bronze	1.A	5,8 x 0,7 tige : 0,2	Tr. 435 Ouest 1,20 m de prof.	Tranch�e « Sud-acropole »
26	26.13	Fl�che � percussion en bronze	3	4 x 0,8	Tr. 150 Est 0,80 m de prof.	Tranch�e « Sud-acropole »
27	26.66	Fl�che � percussion en bronze	1.A	3,5 x 1,1	Tr. 535 W 0,60 m de prof.	Tranch�e « Sud-acropole »
28	29.13	Fl�che ou outil � percussion, � soie	3	5,5 x 0,6	Tr. 10 W, pt. 4618 0,40 m de prof.	« Quartier �g�en », point non localis� sur un plan
29	29.49	Pointe de fl�che � percussion, � longue soie, section carr�e, en bronze	2	6,8 x 1,2 tige : 0,3 x 0,3	Tr. 1 N, pt. 4693 0,10 m de prof.	« Quartier �g�en », point non localis� sur un plan Mantoux 1996, p. 127
30	34.217	Pointe de fl�che � percussion, t�te conique massive, bourrelet, soie � section carr�e	2	5,05 x 1,15 soie : 0,4 x 0,36	« Maison aux alb�tres », pi�ce BD, pt. 157	« Quartier r�sidentiel » ou « �g�en », �lot ouest, « Maison aux alb�tres », pi�ce BD

Tab. 2.2. Le corpus des « pointes de fl che   percussion » d'Ougarit (seconde partie).

La coupe RS 26.318 et la vaisselle en serpentinite d'Ougarit

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Abstract. *Two unpublished drawings documenting the serpentinite vase RS 26.318, recently identified from the archives of the Syrian-French Archeological Mission of Ras Shamra – Ugarit, led us to re-examine this object, a unicum discovered in 1963 on the tell of Ras Shamra. The study also offers the opportunity to reopen the record of serpentinite, a rock available in the northern Levant, in the Baer-Bassit massif and near Ugarit.*

Le présent article se propose de revenir sur un objet d'Ougarit — un *unicum* découvert en 1963 sur le tell de Ras Shamra — suite à l'identification de documents d'archive dont l'analyse vient enrichir nos connaissances sur ce témoin de la culture matérielle ougaritique. C'est aussi l'occasion de retracer l'« histoire » de cet artefact depuis sa mise au jour au cours de la vingt-sixième campagne de fouilles.

Ce dossier s'inscrit dans le vaste programme d'exploitation scientifique des archives de la Mission archéologique syro-française de Ras Shamra – Ougarit dont les objectifs sont d'éditer toute la documentation inédite, en se fondant sur une approche pluridisciplinaire et en privilégiant l'étude des contextes¹.

¹ Établissement de corpus exhaustifs et programmes thématiques structurants (tels celui sur le fait religieux à Ougarit ou sur la géographie sociale et urbaine d'Ougarit). Voir notamment Matoïan 2016a ; Matoïan 2017 ; Matoïan 2019 (sous presse).

Historique

L'objet sous étude est un vase en pierre², incomplet, inscrit sous le numéro RS 26.318 dans l'inventaire des trouvailles de la campagne de 1963. La première mention du récipient dans les publications date de 1991. Le répertoire de la vaisselle en pierre d'Ougarit, établi par Annie Caubet, en fournit une description succincte qui reprend les informations données dans le registre d'inventaire : « coupe godronnée », « marbre gris », « D. 8,5 cm ». En se fondant sur l'indication « secteur 434 W, 1m35 », l'auteure propose une provenance dans le secteur dit « tranchée Sud-acropole »³. À cette date, l'objet n'est pas encore localisé dans les collections des musées et, en l'absence d'une étude directe, aucune illustration n'en est donnée.

En 1993-1994, à l'occasion d'une opération muséographique au Musée national de Damas⁴, Valérie Matoïan localise, identifie et photographie RS 26.318 dans les réserves (**fig. 1**). L'œuvre est une coupe en forme de corolle florale en serpentinite. L'objet, incomplet, a été restauré à partir de nombreux fragments.

L'identification du matériau est confirmée dix ans plus tard par deux géologues de la mission, Claude Chanut et Jean-Claude Icart⁵ (voir Ras Shamra – Ougarit XVII, 2008⁶).

² D'autres travaux récents ont déjà permis d'actualiser le corpus de la vaisselle en pierre d'Ougarit (Matoïan 2008 ; Al-Maqdissi *et al.* 2007, p. 52-53, fig. 18 ; Matoïan et Marchegay 2015 ; Matoïan 2016b). Étude en cours de la vaisselle en albâtre par H. Bouillon, B. Lagarce-Othman (Lagarce 2008 ; Lagarce-Othman 2013) et V. Matoïan.

³ Caubet 1991, p. 239.

⁴ Cette opération a eu pour objectif l'inventaire et le classement, dans les réserves du musée de Damas, d'une grande partie du matériel archéologique issu des campagnes de fouille de 1948 à 1964, soit plus de deux mille objets pour la plupart inédits. Cf. rapport inédit conservé dans les archives de la mission : Matoïan V., *Les collections de Ras Shamra – Ougarit, Réserve du Département des Antiquités orientales du Musée national de Damas, Inventaire du matériel des campagnes de 1948 à 1963 ne portant pas de numéro d'inventaire de musée*, 1994, 50 pages.

⁵ Ce travail a été réalisé dans le cadre du programme d'analyses sur le mobilier en pierre du Palais royal d'Ougarit, de nombreuses pièces issues d'autres provenances furent en effet examinées comme *comparaenda* et pour grossir la base documentaire.

⁶ Icart, Chanut et Matoïan 2008, p. 172, planche XI, 4.

En 2004, le vase est présenté à Lyon lors de l'exposition *Le royaume d'Ougarit* et édité dans le catalogue par Genevière Galliano. La notice, accompagnée d'une photographie en couleur⁷, fournit le numéro d'inventaire donné à l'objet par le Musée national de Damas (8711), mais n'apporte pas de précision sur sa provenance et une identification incorrecte du matériau est proposée (« matière vitreuse »).

Récemment enfin, deux documents inédits en lien avec cet objet ont été reconnus dans les archives de la mission archéologique de Ras Shamra – Ougarit (fonds J.-C. Courtois) : un dessin encre et un dessin au crayon de la coupe RS 26.318, ce dernier accompagné d'annotations manuscrites (**fig. 2 et 3**).

Étude typologique

Le dessin encre, reproduit à la figure 1, documente le profil du vase dont la panse, godronnée, évoque une corolle florale. Au dessus des godrons en fort relief, la lèvre est amincie et éversée. Il présente une base circulaire concave laissant supposer que la panse reposait peut-être sur un petit piédestal amovible (?).

Cette forme est sans parallèle exact. D'un point de vue typologique, des rapprochements peuvent être proposés avec certaines pièces de la documentation ougaritique : d'une part avec une coupe en métal cuivreux (RS 9.882) provenant d'une sépulture du Bronze moyen II⁸ (**fig. 4**) et d'autre part avec une série de coupes en faïence polychrome à décor extérieur de corolle florale datées du Bronze récent II⁹.

La coupe en métal provient de la Tombe LVII [62] de la « Ville Basse ouest ». Claude Schaeffer décrit ainsi la découverte : « dans l'angle S.-E. du caveau était déposée une belle coupe en bronze, ornée de godrons exécutés au repoussé de l'extérieur vers l'intérieur, mais en très mauvais état de conservation par suite de la minceur

⁷ Galliano 2004, n° 220.

⁸ Schaeffer 1938, p. 245-254, fig. 40-41. Cf. Onnis 2017.

⁹ Matoïan 2000, cat. faïence 17662 à 17676, pl. 42-43 ; Matoïan 2007, cat. 213 et 214.

des parois que la patine a rendu très friables, fig. 40 et fig. 41. Le bord est recourbé en ourlet vers l'extérieur, le creux est rempli d'un mastic dur pour donner plus de solidité à la coupe »¹⁰. La sépulture a par ailleurs livré un riche mobilier céramique dont plusieurs vases interprétés par le fouilleur comme des imitations locales de vases minoens¹¹.

Le second parallèle porte sur une catégorie des coupes en faïence polychrome bien connue au Bronze récent à Chypre et au Proche-Orient. Comme nos travaux l'ont montré, Minet el-Beida et Ras Shamra ont fourni le corpus le plus important avec seize spécimens répertoriés, dont plus de la moitié provient de tombes construites. Ce type présente plusieurs variantes (**fig. 5**) : le décor floral est en léger relief ou, plus rarement, incisé ; l'extrémité des pétales est plus ou moins pointue ; les coupes présentent un fond rond, annulaire ou en piédestal. Aucune ne correspond toutefois aux caractéristiques du vase en pierre RS 26.318 dont les pétales sont en fort relief avec une extrémité dont l'arrondi est très prononcé. De plus, son diamètre est inférieur à la fourchette dans laquelle s'inscrivent les spécimens en faïence (diamètre variant de 8,8 à 20 cm)¹².

Hors Ougarit, les *comparenda* établis avec la vaisselle de luxe du Bronze récent en Méditerranée orientale sont peu nombreux et RS 26.318 reste un *hapax* à notre connaissance. Dans la catégorie de la vaisselle en pierre, nous proposons un rapprochement avec deux productions du Bronze récent, l'une minoenne et l'autre chypriote.

La première correspond à l'une des catégories de la vaisselle en pierre minoenne définies par P. Warren, celle des « blossom bowls »¹³. Toutes les occurrences sont en serpentinite, roche représentée par près de 50 % du corpus minoen¹⁴. Leur forme caractéristique est toutefois différente de celle de la coupe d'Ougarit puisqu'il s'agit de bols, à base plate, parois épaisses et panse carénée décorée de pétales en relief à extrémité arrondie (le plus souvent 6). Les spécimens proviennent majoritairement de contextes

¹⁰ Schaeffer 1938, p. 246.

¹¹ Voir aussi Courtois 1979, col. 1206.

¹² La plupart des vases ont un diamètre d'environ 14 cm.

¹³ Warren 1969, p. 14-17, illustrations P. 59 à 64, p. 242, H. de 6, 88 à 11,85 cm.

¹⁴ Warren 1969, p. 138.

datés du Minoen récent I et P. Warren signale des exportations en Grèce, en Asie Mineure et au Levant (Byblos).

Le second rapprochement concerne l'artisanat chypriote. Plusieurs sites de l'île ont en effet livré de petits bols en chloritite à décor godronné, série considérée comme une production chypriote bien caractéristique. Si la plupart sont munis d'une anse¹⁵, un spécimen d'Alassa, sans moyen de préhension, est plus proche du vase en serpentinite d'Ougarit¹⁶. Il s'en distingue toutefois, outre le matériau, par son fond arrondi, le nombre plus élevé de godrons traités dans un relief moins prononcé et la présence d'une moulure sous la lèvre.

Une dernière catégorie est proposée à titre d'hypothèse malgré la complexité du dossier : il s'agit de la vaisselle métallique représentée dans des tombes égyptiennes du Nouvel Empire¹⁷. Dans des scènes de porteurs de tributs égéens (*keftiu*) décorant plusieurs tombes thébaines du début de la XVIII^e dynastie égyptienne (tombes de Senmout, d'Ouseramon, de Menkheperaseneb et de Rekhmirê), est figurée une catégorie de vases¹⁸ pouvant rappeler par leur forme le vase RS 26.318. Les types formels ne sont pas strictement identiques : les vases représentés sont de plus grandes dimensions, reposent sur une base à piédestal et leur forme montre un développement plus important au dessus de la corolle florale qui décore la partie inférieure de la panse. L'un des vases de la Tombe d'Ouseramon (T. 131) datée du règne de Thoutmosis III¹⁹, est celui qui serait le plus proche de RS 26.318²⁰.

¹⁵ Astrom et Astrom 1972, fig. 71 : 47 et p. 541 (spécimen peu profond) ; Courtois et Lagarce E. et J. 1986, p. 126, pl. XXIII : 10 ; Kouklia : Karageorghis 1990, p. 33, n° 32, pl. 23 et 51 ; Kouklia Tombe 104 (bol avec une anse, chloritite, D. 7,5 cm) ; Alassa, Pano Mantilaris : Hadjisavvas 2017, p. 62-63 (PM 159 bol avec une anse, D. 6,1 cm), p. 89-90, Tombe 3, T3-4, fig. 3.23 et 3.33 (*chalk*, D. 7,5 cm).

¹⁶ Hadjisavvas 2017, Tombe 3, p. 96, fig. 3.28 et 3.33 et p. 104 : T3-54 (chlorite, D. 7 cm).

¹⁷ Voir notamment Vercoutter 1956 ; Wachsman 1987 ; Laboury 1990.

¹⁸ Laboury 1990, p. 105-107 : S6, O11-12, M21-28, R16-26.

¹⁹ Wachsmann 1987, p. 31-32, pl. XXVI à XXXIII ; Laboury 1990, p. 105-107 : O11.

²⁰ Wachsmann 1987, p. 64-66, pl. LV : 7.

Étude contextuelle

L'inventaire des trouvailles de 1963 fournit quelques informations sur le lieu de découverte du vase, sans toutefois indiquer un point topographique (voir *supra*). L'objet a été retrouvé au cours du dégagement de la tranchée « Sud-acropole », comme l'a indiqué A. Caubet dès 1991.

L'enquête nous permet aujourd'hui de préciser la localisation de cette trouvaille grâce à une analyse approfondie de la documentation archivistique. RS 26.318 a été retrouvé en bordure ouest de la tranchée, dans la région du bâtiment qui livra le célèbre ensemble de vases en métal précieux, découvert au cours de la campagne précédente et publié par Claude Schaeffer en 1966. La trouvaille, en cours d'étude, comprend le seul rhyton en métal (argent/électrum) d'Ougarit. De forme conique et sans décor, le rhyton RS 25.407 (Damas 3590) est une pièce exceptionnelle dont l'origine continue de faire débat : il est considéré par certains comme une création influencée par les productions égéennes, alors que d'autres y reconnaissent une importation égéenne²¹.

Des indices architecturaux laissent supposer que l'édifice, où fut retrouvé ce riche ensemble métallique mais aussi d'autres témoins de la vaisselle de luxe du Bronze récent II (parmi lesquels plusieurs vases en faïence²²), était le lieu de pratiques cultuelles et/ou rituelles. Et il est fort possible que la coupe en serpentinite RS 26.318 en provienne aussi.

La vaisselle en serpentinite d'Ougarit

La serpentinite, roche tendre de couleur vert à gris-noir, est peu fréquente parmi les découvertes faites à Ougarit, au contraire du matériel en chlorite et en stéatite. Des faciès variés de la roche y ont été observés, ainsi qu'un large éventail typologique. À côté de

²¹ Schaeffer 1966 ; Koehl 2006, p. 242, cat. WA15 (Type III S Conical) daté du LBIII ; Koehl 2008, p. 429 (la forme de l'anse est typique du Minoen récent IA) ; Caubet 2008 (Helladique récent III B) ; Jung 2015, p. 253-254 (production égéenne).

²² Cf. Matoïan 2000.

la vaisselle, on trouve des éléments de parure, un poids, une tête de masse, des haches miniatures, une stèle²³.

Les vases en serpentinite retrouvés à Ougarit sont peu nombreux : moins d'une dizaine de spécimens a été identifiée à ce jour. L'ensemble semble appartenir à la période du Bronze récent et toutes les pièces sont d'une grande qualité technique et esthétique²⁴. Ils sont le plus souvent façonnés dans une roche marbrée très bien polie.

Le volume Ras Shamra – Ougarit, consacré aux *Arts et industries de la pierre à Ougarit*, publie quatre spécimens. Trois vases sont listés dans le catalogue d'A. Caubet²⁵. Seule l'amphore RS 7.208 (Louvre AO 18570) avec une base en piédestal est complète²⁶. La coupe RS 5.221 (Louvre AO 17332) à base annulaire et tenon annulaire horizontal a été partiellement restaurée²⁷. D'un diamètre de 10,8 cm, elle est un peu plus grande que RS 26.318. RS 13.[080] (Louvre 84 AO 502) est un col de vase, haut (D. 10 cm) et cylindrique. Le quatrième récipient (RS 81.3263), dont seule la partie inférieure est conservée, est présenté dans ce même ouvrage par C. Elliott²⁸ : il s'agit d'un vase fermé à panse ovoïde reposant sur une base plate saillante (D. 5,5 cm).

Dans le volume RSO XVII, portant sur le mobilier du Palais royal, nous avons attiré l'attention sur les fragments d'un vase exceptionnel (un autre *unicum*) dont le décor en relief de spirales semble faire référence aux productions égéennes (RS 15.257 + RS 16.22, Damas)²⁹.

Plus récemment, nous avons signalé la présence, parmi le matériel inédit de la Tombe [701] de la Maison dite « d'Ourtenou », d'une cruche (RS 94.2740) imitant la céramique *Base-ring* (cruches

²³ Icart, Chanut, Matoïan 2008, p. 171-172. Pour la stèle, voir Matoïan 2004.

²⁴ Des vases en serpentinite sont connus au Levant nord dès le Bronze moyen : alabastré avec col mouluré de Tell Iris (M. Al-Maqdissi in Aruz et al. 2008, p. 44, n° 18a).

²⁵ Caubet 1991, p. 245.

²⁶ Caubet 1991, p. 225, pl. IV, 1 et XI, 9.

²⁷ Caubet 1991, p. 224, pl. VII, 3 et XII, 13.

²⁸ Elliott 1991, p. 51-52, fig. 15 : 6.

²⁹ Icart, Chanut, Matoïan 2008, pl. XI, 2, 3.

à col large et décor de cordon) en serpentinite³⁰. Les cruches imitant la céramique *Base-ring* constituent un groupe bien documenté dans l'ensemble de la vaisselle de pierre du Levant. Si ces vases sont le plus souvent en « albâtre », plusieurs spécimens en serpentinite sont connus (Tell el-^cAjjul, Hazor, Lachish, Amman et Kamid el-Loz).

On signalera enfin des fragments d'un vase en serpentinite dans le matériel du chantier *Grand-rue*³¹.

Outre leur qualité d'exécution, plusieurs spécimens sont caractérisés par leur taille importante : l'amphore RS 7.208 (H. 19,5 cm), le vase à décor spiralé du palais (RS 15.257 + RS 16.22) et la cruche RS 94.2740 (24 cm).

L'analyse des contextes de découverte montre l'association de ces vases à des édifices ou des tombes en lien avec les élites — Palais royal (RS 15.257 + RS 16.22), Tombe XIII [51] de la Ville Basse ouest (RS 7.208), Tombe [701] de la Maison dite « d'Ourtenou » (RS 94.2740) — ou à des lieux qui servirent de cadre à des pratiques religieuses — l'édifice de la tranchée Sud-acropole, d'où proviendrait RS 26.318, et peut-être le « temple aux rhytons » si l'on associe à ce bâtiment, comme le propose A. Caubet³², le matériel de la « Fosse 1237 » qui a livré le vase RS 81.3263. Dans cette éventualité, on notera que RS 81.3263, comme RS 26.318, serait associé à des rhytons de provenances mycénienne et minoenne³³.

Provenance de la roche

La serpentinite (dont la serpentine est le constituant principal) est une roche essentiellement constituée de deux minéraux, antigorite et chrysotile (ou amiante), qui résultent de la transformation, banale, de l'olivine et de certains pyroxènes des roches ultrabasiques. La serpentinite, plus ou moins pure, existe en abondance

³⁰ Matoïan et Marchegay 2015, p. 106-107. Sur cette catégorie, voir notamment Höflmayer 2011.

³¹ Ce matériel est en cours d'étude.

³² Caubet 1991, p. 217.

³³ Yon 1987.

dans les complexes ophiolitiques, comme le Baër-Bassit au nord de Ras Shamra, Chypre, l'Oman, etc.³⁴

Des gisements de serpentinite sont également connus en Égypte, dans la région du Ouadi Hammamat et autour d'Assouan. En Crète³⁵, son utilisation est fréquente et son emploi est attesté du Minoen ancien II au Minoen récent III³⁶. Pour autant il n'y a pas de traces connues d'une exploitation de carrière de serpentinite à l'âge du Bronze.

L'annotation qui accompagne le dessin au crayon de RS 26.318 — « roche que l'on trouve à mi-chemin de Karkab » (**fig. 3**) — a d'autant plus suscité notre intérêt et nous a conduits à mener une « enquête » pour essayer de localiser ce gisement.

De fait, le toponyme « Karkab » n'existe pas dans la région de Ras Shamra, ou du moins pas avec cette translittération. Après consultation de l'Encyclopédie géographique de la Syrie (1990)³⁷, il s'avère que le seul toponyme qui puisse y correspondre soit « al-Karkîte », une agglomération du *nahia* de Bahlouliyé, *mantika* de Lattaquié, à quelque 18 km à l'est-nord-est de Ras Shamra (**fig. 6**). Situé à 150 m d'altitude, sur les premières pentes du Djebel Ansariyé, al-Karkîte était un village de 699 habitants à la fin des années 1980, dont la population vivait d'agriculture (olivier et céréales pluviales) et de l'exploitation de carrières de gypse³⁸. C'est probablement la présence de ce matériau, rare dans la région, qui aura incité les fouilleurs de Ras Shamra à se rendre dans cette agglomération dont un des hameaux a pour toponyme *al-Jabsine* (le gypse). Or, à peu près à mi-chemin entre Ras Shamra et al-Karkîte, se trouve la localité d'al-Knaissat, où la carte géologique de Lattaquié au 1:50.000³⁹ indique la présence d'affleurements de *Pre-Upper Triassic* (σT_3), roches ultrabasiques de la série ophiolitique du Baër-Bassit⁴⁰, contenant de l'olivine, de la stéatite, de la serpentine, etc.

³⁴ Icart, Chanut et Matoïan 2008, p. 170.

³⁵ Warren 1969, p. 138-139.

³⁶ Athanasaki 2014, p. 67.

³⁷ Nous remercions Mohamed Al-Dbiyat pour la recherche qu'il a effectuée dans cette encyclopédie et pour les renseignements précieux qu'il nous a fournis.

³⁸ *Encyclopédie géographique de la Syrie*, 1990, p. 21.

³⁹ Ponikarov 1968.

⁴⁰ La série correspond à un morceau de croûte océanique charrié sur le continent (Icart *et al.*, 2008, p. 159).

Hormis deux affleurements de surfaces très restreintes, à Lattaquié (à 8,5 km de Ras Shamra) et à Bisnada (à 6 km), les gisements qui entourent al-Knaissat, plus nombreux et surtout plus étendus, sont les plus proches de Ras Shamra (entre 9,5 et 12 km). Au delà il faut aller au nord-est jusqu'au Nahr el-Assouad (à près de 20 km) et à Zighrin (à 17 km) pour retrouver ces matériaux à l'affleurement. Certes des galets de ces roches — des fragments de serpentinite, de diabase, de gabbros pouvant atteindre 20 cm — peuvent être ramassés parmi les alluvions du Nahr el-Kandil⁴¹, qui draine la région de Zighrin, mais ce cours d'eau se situe lui aussi à distance de Ras Shamra (à environ 15 km) et la récolte est plus aléatoire.

Conclusion et perspectives

Cette étude permet de souligner la valeur documentaire d'un objet unique d'Ougarit, remarquable par sa forme, sa matière et ses qualités d'exécution. Si l'artefact avait attiré l'attention des fouilleurs dès sa découverte comme semble l'indiquer les annotations associées au crayonné, aucune analyse détaillée ne lui avait été consacrée. En réexaminant le dossier de la serpentinite et de ses attestations à Ougarit, le travail nous a permis de réévaluer le corpus de la vaisselle façonnée dans cette roche, l'un des plus importants du Proche-Orient, et par là même de documenter une catégorie d'objets dont il est difficile de retrouver la trace dans les textes. Le nom de la serpentinite n'est en effet pas attesté avec certitude dans les sources ougaritiques⁴².

En l'absence d'étude géologique de terrain plus approfondie et d'analyses en laboratoire des œuvres⁴³, leur origine de production reste difficile à déterminer. L'hypothèse d'une production au Levant nord est tout à fait envisageable, le matériau étant largement disponible dans la région. Elle a déjà été suggérée pour certaines pièces. Dans son étude de la vaisselle en pierre du Levant, T.

⁴¹ Elliott 1991, p. 11 ; Icart *et al.*, 2008, p. 160.

⁴² Voir Chanut 2000, p. 170-173. L'auteur suggère que le terme *algamiššu* pourrait avoir servi à désigner la stéatite et peut-être aussi la serpentinite.

⁴³ Opérations qu'il conviendrait de mettre en œuvre dans l'avenir.

Sparks propose en effet d'attribuer à un atelier syrien la production d'une petite série de vases en serpentinite⁴⁴ au nombre desquels figure l'un des spécimens d'Ougarit, la coupe RS 5.221 conservée au Louvre⁴⁵.

L'un des points remarquables mis en évidence ici sont les rapprochements qui ont été proposés avec certaines productions égéennes ou associées aux Égéens pour plusieurs vases en serpentinite d'Ougarit : le vase en forme de corolle florale RS 26.318 et le vase à décor spiralé du Palais royal (RS 15.257+), et peut-être aussi le vase RS 81.3263 du Centre de la Ville qui, selon C. Elliott, « may ultimately derive from Cretan inspiration ». On rappellera que la vaisselle égéenne en pierre est rare à Ougarit. À ce jour, la lampe Louvre AO 13519 (= AO 18650), à laquelle nous consacrerons prochainement une étude, serait la seule importation égéenne avérée⁴⁶. Ce vase n'est pas en serpentinite mais en stéatite/chloritite.

Plusieurs pistes de recherche se dessinent. L'une des perspectives sera d'approfondir l'étude contextuelle, élargie à l'ensemble de la documentation. Un autre axe de recherche devra s'attacher à mieux définir la valeur attribuée par les Ougaritains à la serpentinite, roche aux teintes vertes et grises pouvant se parer de marbrures, dont nous avons souligné l'emploi singulier et possiblement à valeur symbolique pour l'une des stèles de Ras Shamra⁴⁷.

Enfin, une troisième enquête sera de mieux évaluer la place tenue par la vaisselle métallique comme source d'inspiration formelle et décorative pour la vaisselle de luxe fabriquée dans d'autres matériaux : la pierre, la céramique, les matières vitreuses, l'ivoire. Récemment, nous avons proposé de reconnaître l'emprunt de motifs décoratifs attestés dans l'orfèvrerie égéenne pour deux vases retrouvés à Ougarit : une pyxide en ivoire d'éléphant du Palais

⁴⁴ Sparks 2007, p. 122-123.

⁴⁵ Sparks 2007, cat. 1462. *Contra* A. Caubet qui classe le vase parmi les importations minoennes (Caubet 1991, p. 215).

⁴⁶ T. Sparks propose à titre d'hypothèse d'inclure dans ce groupe trois autres vases de Ras Shamra illustrant des formes différentes [Sparks 2007, cat. 6 (RS 8.538)], Acropole, 2^e-3^e niveau ; cat. 9 (Louvre 85 AO 742) ; cat. 10 (RS 83.5156)], mais ne retient pas les propositions d'A. Caubet (Caubet 1991, p. 215 : propose une liste de 8 vases dans la catégorie des « vases de type égéen »).

⁴⁷ Matoïan 2004.

royal à décor de feuillage (RS 15.116)⁴⁸ et une coupe en céramique mycénienne à décor zoomorphe découverte à Minet el-Beida⁴⁹. Le vase en serpentinite RS 26.318 pourrait-il représenter un troisième exemple ?

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⁴⁸ Gachet-Bizollon 2007, cat. 74 (H. 13,5 cm), p. 84.

⁴⁹ Matoïan 2018.

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Fig. 1. Photographie de la coupe en serpentinite RS 26.318, tranchée Sud-acropole, Ougarit (Mission de Ras Shamra, cliché V. Matoïan).

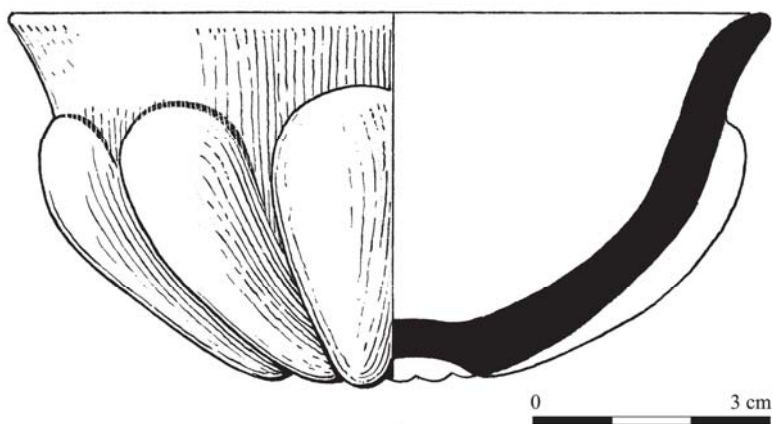


Fig. 2. Dessin de la coupe en serpentinite RS 26.318, tranchée Sud-acropole, Ougarit (Mission de Ras Shamra, infographie G. Devilder).

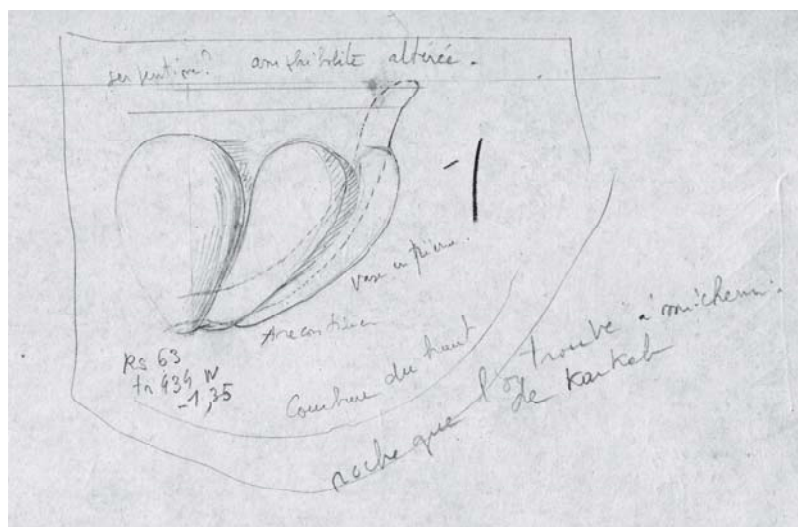


Fig. 3. Dessin au crayon de la coupe en serpentinite RS 26.318, tranchée Sud-acropole, Ougarit (Mission de Ras Shamra, infographie V. Matoïan).

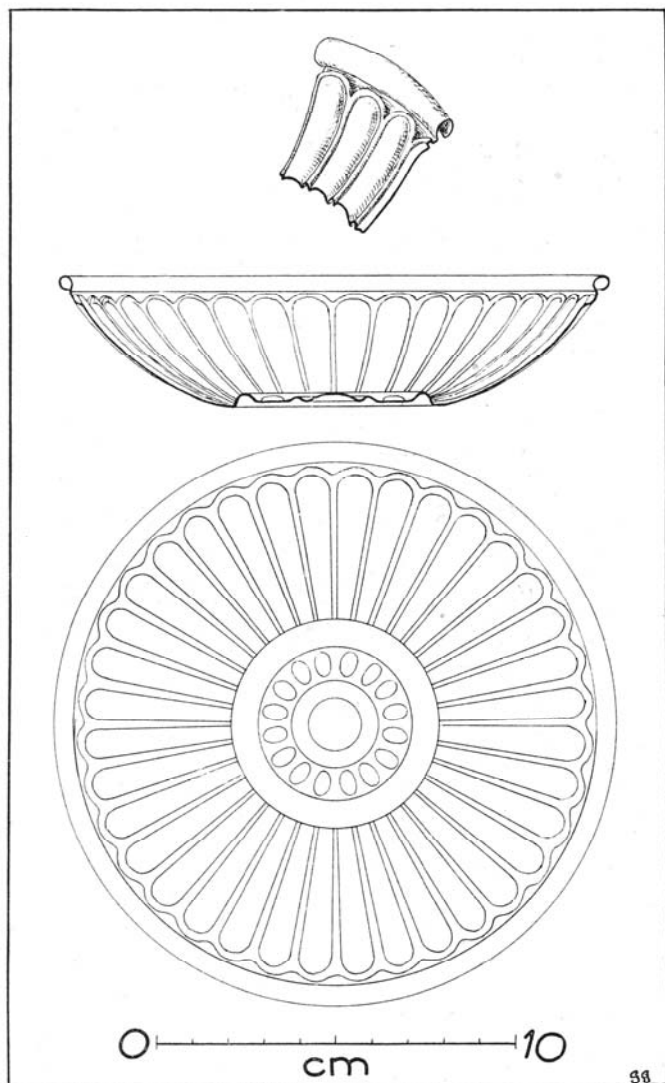


Fig. 58. — Coupe en cuivre repoussé,
tombe LVII, Ras Shamra (p. 67 et fig. 57).
Dessin de G. Gaudron.

Fig. 4. Dessin de la coupe en bronze RS 9.882 de la Tombe LVII [62],
« Ville Basse ouest » (Schaeffer 1939).

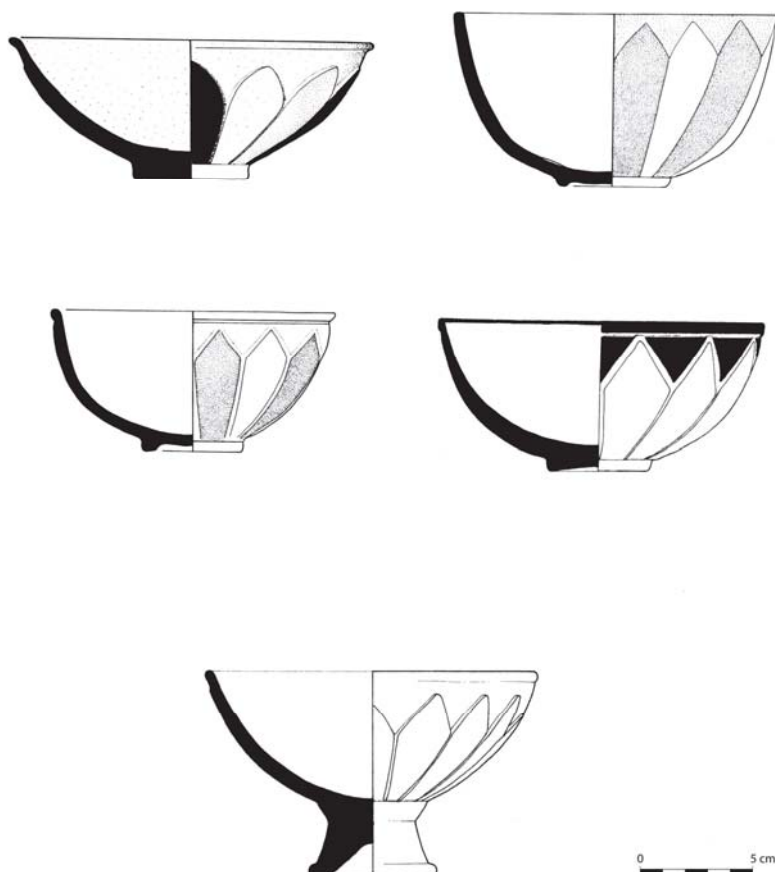


Fig. 5. Coupes en faïence polychrome de Ras Shamra (d'après Matoïan 2000, dessins de C. Florimont et de V. Bernard).

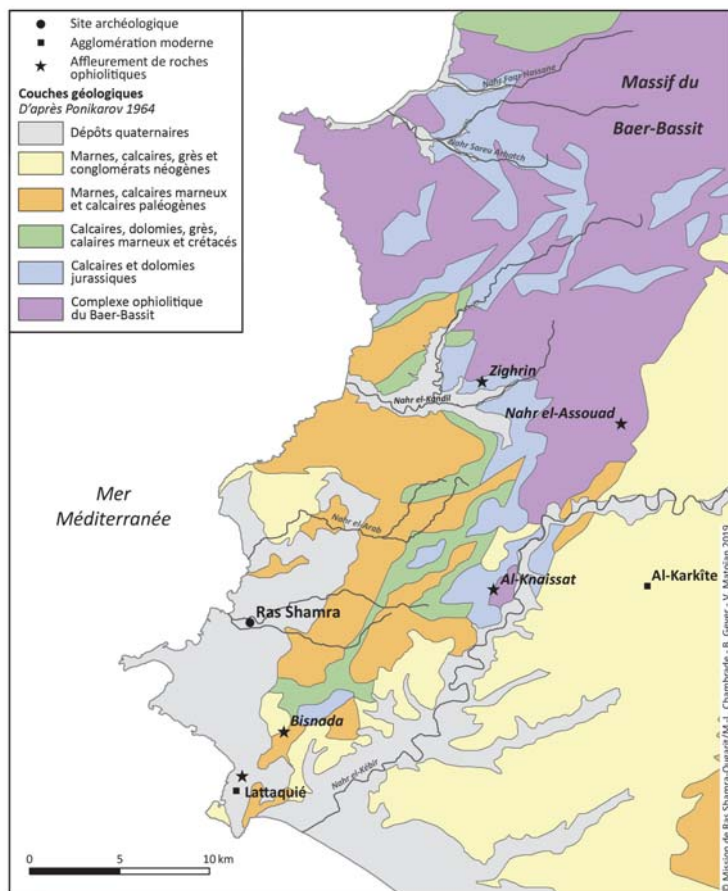


Fig. 6. Localisation des gisements de roches ophiolitiques dans la région de Ras Shamra [fonds de carte : Geyer et Chambrade 2019 (sous presse). Mission de Ras Shamra, conception et infographie B. Geyer et M.-L. Chambrade].

Quand les femmes apparaissent sur des ânes ; de quelques ambassades féminines à Ugarit et dans la Bible hébraïque

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Abstract. *This article seeks to bring together a peripheral image present at Ugarit and in the Hebrew Bible, that of the woman on a donkey. What does the donkey represent in the Syrian-Palestinian culture, what happens when he becomes the mount of a woman? In common cultural memory, a woman on a donkey could carry the idea of a peaceful embassy but a risky initiative for the protagonist, which transgresses the standards of propriety.*

Comparer l'incomparable ?¹

On rencontre quelquefois dans la Bible hébraïque une figure assez particulière, bien que marginale, celle d'une femme montée sur un âne, image sans doute bien ordinaire d'un monde méditerranéen et proche-oriental agricole, héritier aussi de traditions bédouines. Cependant, il arrive à ces femmes montées sur un âne des aventures qui ne sont pas ordinaires ; d'autre part, on trouve également

¹ Je ne peux ici que rendre hommage à la mémoire de l'historien Marcel Detienne, récemment disparu, dont les travaux invitant à dépasser les frontières des disciplines et celles des géographies pour un comparatisme constructif ont ouvert des horizons nouveaux dans la recherche en sciences sociales. Cf. Marcel Detienne, *Comparer l'incomparable*, Paris, Seuil, coll. "Points Essais", 2009 et Marcel Detienne, « Pour un débat sur les historicités comparées », in *Israël construit son histoire. L'historiographie deutéronomiste à la lumière des recherches récentes*, éd. par Albert de Pury, Thomas Römer, Jean-Daniel Macchi, Le Monde de la Bible (MdB 34), Genève, Labor et Fides, 1996, p. 153-166.

à Ougarit, dans le poème mythologique du “Cycle de Baal”², la figure de la déesse Athirat montée sur un âne pour aller demander à El, le père des dieux, la permission pour Baal de construire un temple, signe de sa légitimité. De plus, un sceau cylindre provenant d'Ougarit semble également évoquer cette même figure d'une déesse montée sur un âne.

Il ne s'agit pas de plaquer une simple comparaison entre deux ensembles de témoignages qui ne datent pas de la même époque et ne proviennent pas des mêmes milieux de scribes. Les textes bibliques sont postérieurs de plusieurs siècles aux éléments trouvés à Ougarit et leurs auteurs ne connaissaient pas directement ces éléments ougaritiques. Mais ils ne surgissent pas sans connections avec le monde syro-palestinien dont ils sont issus et en partagent des représentations, des catégories mentales. L'interrogation portera donc plutôt sur l'existence possible d'une sorte d'imaginaire commun fournissant un réservoir d'images, ici celle de la femme sur l'âne, évoquant pour les premiers récepteurs un code de lecture de la réalité, des clés d'interprétation d'une scène. Ces images feraient partie d'une sorte de mémoire collective disponible, réactualisable à chaque apparition.

Je me permettrai donc ici de faire une incursion dans un domaine qui n'est pas le mien, avec un travail mêlant mon domaine de recherche, la Bible hébraïque, avec le monde d'Ougarit et du Proche-Orient ancien. Une première enquête me portera à rassembler quelques éléments sur la présence des ânes et leur importance dans le monde du Proche-Orient ancien ; j'examinerai ensuite deux évocations d'une femme sur un âne à Ougarit, puis celles de la Bible hébraïque et leurs enjeux dans les textes. À partir de ce dossier, je proposerai quelques hypothèses pour “décoder” le sens de l'image de la femme sur l'âne dans ce monde culturel sémitique syro-palestinien ancien reflétant peut-être des représentations com-

² Ce grand poème mythologique de 1500 lignes connues sur 2000 environ raconte l'ascension du dieu Baal avec son combat contre Yam qui lui donne la maîtrise de la mer puis son sacrifice face à Mot qui assure la fertilité de la terre ; il a été trouvé dans un bâtiment à Ougarit qu'on désigne comme la “maison du grand prêtre” et on le date de la 1^{re} moitié du XIV^e s.

munes venant de la fin de l'âge du Bronze et qui auraient pu perdurer, avec des évolutions possibles, entre la moitié du deuxième millénaire et celle du premier millénaire environ.

1. Quelques éléments sur la présence des ânes dans le monde du Proche-Orient ancien depuis le Bronze ancien

N'étant pas spécialiste de cette question, je me contenterai ici de mentionner quelques données reprises chez divers chercheurs, historiens, archéologues, paléozoologues, linguistes ou épigraphistes compétents.

a. Des ânes domestiqués depuis le III^e millénaire

La présence d'ânes domestiqués est attestée en Syro-Palestine depuis le III^e millénaire avant notre ère. D'après B. Lafont, « l'âne domestique est apparu au Proche-Orient vraisemblablement à l'époque d'Uruk, sans doute introduit depuis l'Afrique (espèce *Equus africanus*). Il s'agit de l'espèce la plus courante parmi les équidés attestés en Syrie et Mésopotamie au III^e et au début du II^e millénaires. Le prix moyen d'un âne à la fin du III^e millénaire est d'environ 4 à 7 sicles d'argent »³.

On distingue plusieurs sortes d'équidés, ânes, onagres (ânes sauvages) ou hémiones de diverses espèces, chevaux, mules et mullets (hybrides entre ânes, onagres et chevaux) et on trouve différents mots en sumérien et en akkadien pour les désigner. Il semble que l'âne domestique était l'espèce la plus répandue.

En Palestine, la partie supérieure d'un âne a été retrouvée à proximité d'une maison dans ce qui est interprété comme une zone de dépotoir à Tell es-Sakan près de Gaza (chantier C), datant du Bronze ancien III à la fin du troisième millénaire.

³ Bertrand Lafont, « Cheval, âne, onagre et mule dans la haute histoire mésopotamienne : quelques données nouvelles », *Topoi*, Supplément 2, *Les animaux et les hommes dans le monde syro-mésopotamien aux époques historiques*, 2000, p. 207-221.

On a aussi retrouvé deux squelettes d'équidés à Mari, un à proximité des restes d'une roue et d'objets en bronze au milieu de ce qui semble être des murs effondrés et un autre à proximité d'un squelette humain sur un sol. Une première interprétation a proposé plutôt des ensevelissements liés à une catastrophe naturelle, peut-être lors d'une destruction en 2800⁴, mais on peut aussi penser à un ensevelissement lié à une pratique rituelle. À Mari, on distingue les ânes de bât, les ânes attelés, les ânes montés ainsi que les ânes mis à mort au cours de cérémonies rituelles⁵.

b. Différentes fonctions : transport de marchandises et de personnes

Ces ânes assurent donc d'abord différentes fonctions liées au commerce, au transport de marchandises et de messages, à la traction ; ils ont en premier lieu une valeur essentielle dans le domaine économique. Comme le précise D. Lafont, les conditions de transport en Haute Mésopotamie, ainsi qu'en Syrie-Palestine, qui ne bénéficiaient pas du réseau de canaux de Basse-Mésopotamie, valorisent l'âne avec des caravanes permettant d'assurer la vitalité des échanges économiques.

Il faut mentionner ici un texte d'une lettre de Mari adressée au roi Zimri-Lim⁶ évoquant les mésaventures en pays d'Akkad d'une femme transportée sur un âne à Agadé, c'est l'épisode du rapt d'une musicienne⁷. La ville d'Ešnunna vient de tomber, et parmi le butin résultant du pillage, se trouvent deux musiciennes de la cour.

⁴ Cf. Emmanuelle Vila, « L'âne domestique en Syrie : réflexions sur les données nouvelles de Mari », *Syria sup* 2 (2014), p. 425-436. Elle indique aussi p. 433-434 que « En Égypte, les plus anciens ânes retrouvés inhumés et identifiés comme domestiques sont datés d'environ 3000 av. J.-C. Ils sont d'une grande taille, proche de celle des ânes sauvages » et que « jusqu'à présent, en Mésopotamie, les inhumations d'ânes découvertes sur plusieurs sites d'Iraq et de Syrie appartenaient à des contextes de la seconde moitié du IIIe millénaire (...) ».

⁵ Bertrand Lafont, « Cheval, âne, onagre et mule... », p. 212.

⁶ Le dernier roi de Mari (1775-1761).

⁷ Cf. Nele Ziegler, *Florilegium Marianum* IX. *Les Musiciens et la musique d'après les archives de Mari*, Mémoires de NABU 10, Paris, 2007, p. 282-286 ; texte 71. Merci à Nele Ziegler de m'avoir signalé ce texte.

L'une meurt mais l'autre, Huššutum, doit être envoyée incognito par Gumul-sin à son nouveau propriétaire, sous escorte, sur un âne. Mais les consignes de prudence ne sont pas respectées par les guides et la musicienne est reconnue par les habitants d'Agade comme venant d'Ešnunna ; elle est kidnappée et empêchée de suivre son voyage au delà du territoire de la ville. La nouvelle provoque la colère de Atamrum, qui semble assurer alors l'autorité à Ešnunna, contre Gumul-Sin :

(19'-20') [Gumul-Si]n a fait sortir la femme par la porte (de la ville). Là où il devait aller, [un rapport] sera fait à mon seigneur. (20'-21') Par ailleurs, aux guides, j'ai donné l'ordre [suivant] : (21'-23') « Jusqu'à ce que vous ayez fait passer la femme vers une ville-frontière, changez son habillement et son couvre-chef ! » (23'-24') Les gens ont été négligents et ne (les) ont pas changés. (25') Par ailleurs, à elle, ils ont ajouté trois, quatre femmes. (26') Ils ont équipé leur expédition et sont partis. (27'-29') Ils sont arrivés à Agadé, ont bu de la bière ; ils ont fait chevaucher la femme sur un âne de bât en la conduisant à travers la grande place d'Agadé. (30') La femme a été reconnue et on l'a saisie. (31'-32') La nouvelle de sa capture est parvenue chez Atamrum à Ešnunna et (33'-34') 30 soldats à lances en bronze ont encerclé Gumul-Sin en disant : (34'-36') « Ton seigneur (= Atamrum) t'a fait porter cinq mines d'argent et tu ne cesses de vendre des filles d'Ešnunna ! ».

On notera qu'ici cette malheureuse chanteuse n'est pas montée de son plein gré sur un âne. Elle est un objet d'échange et de tractations diverses mais ne montre aucune initiative personnelle ; l'âne est simplement son moyen de transport.

c. Monture de prestige

Mais si l'âne est une bête de somme, c'est aussi un animal de prestige. Déjà à l'époque d'Ur III, l'âne est associé au personnage de haut rang dans les textes comme dans l'iconographie⁸. Ces équidés

⁸ On peut citer un des textes mentionnés par B. Lafont, un hymne du roi Šulgi à l'époque d'Ur III, qui déjà se présente ainsi : « *Je suis un mulet prêt pour la route, un*

sont dans ce cas liés à des personnages masculins et la comparaison avec l'âne joue sur le symbole de virilité, de puissance, y compris sexuelle. C'est la monture du chef.

Comme on le sait, la chute de l'empire d'Ur en 2004 est liée à l'arrivée par l'Ouest et la prise de pouvoir progressive en Mésopotamie de groupes nomades d'éleveurs vraisemblablement venus de Syrie, les Amorrites ; ils parlent une langue sémitique, n'ont pas laissé d'écrits, s'inscrivent dans des réseaux complexes d'appartenances tribales, quittent leur région d'origine pour des raisons peu claires (changement climatique ?) au cours du XXI^e siècle et vont installer durablement leurs dynasties au pouvoir en Mésopotamie entre le XX^e et le XVII^e siècles. Dans leur culture d'origine bédouine, les princes amorrites préfèrent les ânes et les mules aux chevaux comme monture royale et « l'âne apparaît comme le seul animal digne d'un grand roi amorrite »⁹.

On trouve, dans les documents épistolaires du palais de Mari présentés par J.-M. Durand¹⁰, une lettre de Bahdi-Lim, gouverneur de Mari, qui donne le conseil à son roi Zimri-Lim de ne pas rentrer à Mari sur un cheval car cela le marquerait trop comme un roi « étranger » aux yeux de certains de ses sujets¹¹.

Notons au passage que le cheval, apparu aussi en Mésopotamie dans le courant du III^e millénaire, dont l'usage domestique se développe à partir de la fin du III^e millénaire, est alors considéré lui aussi comme un élément de prestige, mais comme un élément venu d'ailleurs (Anatolie, Iran), offert en cadeau très prisé dans les présents royaux. Il n'est pas porteur des mêmes valeurs symboliques. Il va prendre une importance majeure dans les armées, avec les cavaliers et les chars attelés à des chevaux harnachés au II^e puis au I^{er} millénaires. Certaines lettres trouvées à Ugarit évoqueront ces activités de livraisons de chevaux pour l'armée du roi et des textes donnant des conseils pour soigner les chevaux malades font également partie des archives ougaritiques.

cheval agitant la queue sur le chemin, un âne étalon du dieu Sakan avide de course » in Bertrand Lafont, « Cheval, âne, onagre et mule... », p. 213.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

¹⁰ Jean-Marie Durand, *Les documents épistolaires du palais de Mari*, LAPO 17, Paris, Cerf, 1998.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 485.

On connaît aussi par divers textes l'existence d'une « fête de l'âne » ou d'un « jour de l'âne » qui apparaît comme très importante dans le Proche-Orient amorrite (on la retrouve à Alep, Ougarit, à Mari et dans d'autres villes importantes de l'époque), mais on ignore presque tout de son sens et son fonctionnement¹².

d. Immolation d'âne

Ceci nous amène à une dernière fonction symbolique importante des ânes, c'est leur présence dans des rituels dont on trouve des traces écrites et archéologiques.

Des lettres de Mari évoquent dans cette même période amorrite la pratique de rituels d'alliances diplomatiques avec une cérémonie incluant la mise à mort d'ânes et plus précisément d'ânon¹³. D. Charpin précise qu'on ne peut parler de sacrifice à ce sujet car l'âne est immolé mais non destiné à un dieu et le vocabulaire utilisé pour cette immolation n'est ni celui de l'offrande ni celui du sacrifice ; ce rituel d'immolation, lié à l'établissement d'un contrat d'alliance entre deux rois, établi en leur présence au cours d'une rencontre, est plutôt à lire comme l'annonce du sort qui attend l'éventuel contrevenant à l'alliance qui est en train d'être scellée : celui qui s'engage dans une alliance avec le rituel de l'ânon met donc sa vie en jeu s'il ne la respecte pas. D. Charpin propose de nombreux textes permettant de mieux comprendre l'importance et le sens de ce rite ; pour ne citer qu'un exemple, une lettre écrite à Zimri-Lim par

¹² Bertrand Lafont « Cheval, âne, onagre et mule... », p. 216.

¹³ Cf. les pages très éclairantes de Dominique Charpin dans son récent ouvrage : « *Tu es de mon sang* ». *Les alliances dans le Proche Orient ancien*, Paris, Collège de France – Les Belles Lettres, 2019, en particulier p. 51-60. Il lie ce rituel à une cérémonie d'alliance : *harayam qatâlum* (immoler un ânon) selon l'expression amorrite et propose de faire une distinction essentielle entre les gestes d'alliance réalisés en présence des deux parties et ceux réalisés à distance avec un écrit à lire et un autre type de rituel, celui du « toucher de la gorge » avec du sang échangé. Je reprends ici les hypothèses de Dominique Charpin plutôt que celles de Bertrand Lafont qui interprète la mise à mort de l'ânon comme un rituel où son sang scelle une alliance de sang entre les partenaires, ce qui correspond plutôt au rituel du « toucher de la gorge » dans lequel ne figure pas d'immolation d'âne.

Yasim-El, son représentant, décrit une alliance établie entre plusieurs rois dans une ville frontalière :

Atamrum, avec son armée de renfort et les rois qui sont avec lui, est allé à Šidqum au devant d'Askur-Addu; ils se sont tous rejoints à Šidqum, ils ont commencé à discuter de leur alliance (*awat birišunnu*) et ils ont tué un ânon. (ARM 26/2 404 : 9-12)¹⁴

On a également retrouvé dans des territoires liés aux Amorrites et à cette époque (XVIII^e-XVII^e siècles) des sépultures d'ânes, parfois aussi avec des chiens comme à Tell Brak¹⁵.

Pour le synthétiser avec D. Lafont, « dans la documentation de Mari, l'âne nous apparaît désormais clairement à la fois comme *animal royal* et comme *animal de paix*. Et il semble avoir un rapport très particulier avec la royauté bédouine d'origine amorrite. »

e. Les ânes à Ougarit

Mais revenons en Syrie et à Ougarit. On sait que le petit royaume d'Ougarit, carrefour économique et d'échanges multiples par son ouverture sur la Méditerranée avec le port de Minet-el-Beida, d'abord sous forte influence de l'Égypte dont il est vassal puis sous domination hittite, est un notable lieu de croisement de populations et de cultures. Le Bronze récent est la dernière période d'occupation de la ville, aux XIII^e et début du XII^e siècles et on y trouve des influences culturelles nombreuses et variées.

Il n'apparaît pas d'ânes dans le répertoire pourtant bien fourni d'objets du Bronze récent avec des représentations animales trouvés à Ougarit établi par Y. Calvet¹⁶. L'animal cependant y est bien

¹⁴ Dominique Charpin, *Op. cit.*, p. 55.

¹⁵ On trouve un cliché de la tombe d'un âne dans un temple de Tell Brack chez Dominique Charpin, *Op. cit.*, p. 51.

¹⁶ Yves Calvet, « Ougarit : les animaux symboliques du répertoire figuré au Bronze récent », *Topoi*, supplément 2, *Les animaux et les hommes dans le monde syro-mésopotamien aux époques historiques*, Lyon, 2000, p. 447-465.

attesté. Selon des données fournies par D. Pardee¹⁷, au Bronze récent à Ougarit, « le prix de l'âne se situe entre celui du taureau et celui de la jument, soit environ 30 sicles d'argent ».

Si, comme nous l'avons mentionné, on a des traces d'activités spécifiquement liées aux chevaux à Ougarit, les chevaux semblent plus liés aux divinités, « l'âne devait servir l'homme quotidiennement, et les propriétaires humains de chevaux devaient appartenir à la classe sociale qui côtoyaient le divin »¹⁸.

L'âne est mentionné dans des textes administratifs qui lui attribuent des rations d'orge. Notons, toujours avec D. Pardee, qu'il est dans ce cas désigné par le terme commun de *ḥmr/ḥimāru*, comme *imēru* en akkadien et *ḥ^amōr* en hébreu alors que dans un texte où il est question de la monture d'un cavalier messenger, c'est le mot *prd/pardu* qui est utilisé et qui désigne peut-être un mulet¹⁹.

Un corpus de tablettes d'Ougarit présente des textes rituels dont l'un décrit un rituel où l'âne joue un rôle important, où il est désigné cette fois par le mot *ʿr/ʿēru*²⁰. Il s'agit d'un rituel d'alliance en trois étapes, avec trois animaux sacrifiés. Le premier est une bête non-identifiée qui permet d'organiser un repas festif pour instaurer une symbolique de paix entre les convives et avec leurs dieux ; suit le sacrifice d'un bélier en expiation des péchés ; vient enfin l'abattage rituel d'un âne désigné comme « âne de la rectitude » censé garantir l'équilibre social des différentes catégories de populations à l'intérieur des murs d'Ougarit. D. Pardee le présente comme une sorte de sacrifice de paix, qu'il rapproche des rituels en akkadien de Mari (avec le mot amorrite *ʿayāru* pour désigner l'animal sacrifié, proche aussi de l'hébreu *ʿayir*) en faisant l'hypothèse que « L'usage du terme et de la pratique dans ce rite de la fin du Bronze récent devait donc conserver des éléments d'un ancien rite amorite d'alliance ». Il faudrait reprendre la discussion avec les hypothèses proposées par D. Charpin pour affiner le sens de ce rite et vérifier si l'âne est vraiment « sacrifié » ou simplement abattu

¹⁷ Dennis Pardee, « Les équidés à Ougarit au Bronze récent : la perspective des textes », *Topoi*, supplément 2, 2000, *Les animaux et les hommes dans le monde syro-mésopotamien aux époques historiques*, Lyon, p. 223-234, ici p. 224.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 228-229 pour la description du rite concernant l'abattage de l'âne, en ougaritique avec une proposition de traduction.

et sur le sens de ce geste. D. Pardee note du reste que pour l'immolation de l'âne le verbe désigne l'abattage et non le sacrifice à proprement parler. Mais je retiendrai ici simplement le sens d'un geste d'alliance, de rassemblement et de garantie du maintien d'un équilibre social entres diverses composantes de la population.

D. Pardee reprend également le « Cycle de Baal », où apparaît le même mot *r/ʿêru* à propos d'un voyage à dos d'âne sur lequel je vais revenir plus précisément puisqu'il s'agit du voyage d'une figure féminine de déesse montée sur un âne.

2. Deux figures féminines sur un âne à Ougarit

La première figure féminine sur un âne se trouve donc dans un texte mythologique, la seconde sur un sceau-cylindre.

a. La visite d'Athirat à El dans le *Cycle de Baal*

Dans le grand poème du *Cycle de Baal* trouvé à Ougarit et écrit en ougaritique, la colonne IV met en scène la parèdre de El, Athirat, qui planifie une visite chez son mari afin d'obtenir pour son fils Baal, « le Seigneur de la terre », la permission de construire un palais, ce qui établira la légitimité de son pouvoir après sa lutte victorieuse contre son frère Yam « le Seigneur de la mer » et la possibilité de recevoir des hommages dignes de son rang. Des épisodes précédents semblent établir que les relations d'Athirat avec Baal et sa sœur-épouse Anat n'ont pas toujours été des plus pacifiques mais Athirat se laisse convaincre d'entreprendre ce voyage auprès de El par de nombreux cadeaux fabriqués par le dieu forgeron Kothar sur ordre de Baal.

Elle est aidée dans son entreprise par son serviteur Qodesh Amrou et il semble qu'Anat soit également présente avec un rôle parfois difficile à préciser.

D. Pardee propose une transcription et une traduction de l'épisode de la mise en route d'Athirat²¹ (CTA 4 iv 1-17). Je reproduis ici cette traduction en y insérant les trois différentes racines pouvant désigner âne, étalon et ânesse présents dans ce texte :

La dame 'Aṭiratu de la Mer répond :
« Écoute, ô Qudšu-wa-'Amruru
pêcheur de la dame 'Aṭiratu de la Mer :
Selle l'âne (r/'êru/), harnache l'âne étalon (pḥl/paḥlu/),
mets le harnachement d'argent,
la bride d'or jaune,
prépare le harnachement de mon ânesse (atn/'atānu/) ».
Qudšu-wa-'Amruru obtempère :
il selle l'âne, harnache l'âne étalon,
il met le harnachement d'argent,
la bride d'or jaune,
il prépare le harnachement de son ânesse.
Qudšu-wa-'Amruru prend à bras-le-corps 'Aṭiratu
Il la place sur la croupe de l'âne,
sur la croupe richement ornée de l'âne étalon.
Qudšu se met en route, lumineux comme un feu,
'Amruru, comme une étoile, précède.

Les lignes suivantes précisent qu'Anat suit l'équipage alors que Baal retourne à Saphon.

Cet équipage se rend donc à la « source des fleuves » dans une zone frontière qui sépare les deux abîmes d'eau douce et salée pour rejoindre la résidence de El ; Athirat entre dans le domicile royal, s'incline et tombe à ses pieds. El l'accueille favorablement et finira par accéder à sa demande²² convaincu par les cadeaux et les paroles d'Athirat.

²¹ Dennis Pardee, *Op. cit.*, p. 230.

²² Cf. André Caquot, Maurice Sznycer, et al., *Textes Ougaritiques. Mythes et légendes* (vol. 1), LAPO, Paris, Cerf, 1974. Voici le texte proposé par A. Caquot, p. 203-204, col IV, lignes 23-40 : « Elle atteint les pavillons d'El / et pénètre dans le domicile royal du père des ans. / Elle s'incline et tombe prosternée aux pieds d'El / et elle lui rend honneur. / Alors, quand El l'aperçoit, / il déride le front et rit, / il tape du pied sur le marchepied / et fait tournoyer ses doigts. / Il prend la parole

On voit donc qu'Athirat utilise un âne comme monture²³ au service d'un projet. Quel message les transmetteurs-rédacteurs de ce texte ancien peuvent-ils faire passer avec cette figure de la femme sur l'âne ?

Le contexte introduit plusieurs éléments. D'une part, l'aventure se situe dans un ensemble d'épisodes comportant du danger et de l'animosité. Les relations ne sont pas très pacifiques entre les différents protagonistes, et Athirat ne sait pas comment elle sera accueillie par El ; elle n'a pas été appelée par lui, elle prend une initiative et on ignore quelle sera la réaction du père des dieux à sa visite. Elle est de surcroît porteuse d'une demande qui n'est pas anodine et n'a rien de protocolaire, contrairement à son geste de prosternation ; Baal n'a pas de palais comme les autres dieux et ne peut recevoir les plus grands honneurs. Il s'agit donc de donner à Baal, qui s'est rebellé contre les ordres de El son père, les moyens de faire reconnaître sa puissance de dieu vainqueur contre Yam son frère aîné, fils bien-aimé de El.

La déesse arrive comme une ambassadrice ; elle a une requête à adresser et se présente sur une monture qui lui donne du prestige, richement harnachée. Cela souligne son statut hiérarchique et symbolique, d'autant plus que sa requête peut provoquer une réaction de rejet de la part de son interlocuteur ; acceptera-t-il une telle « promotion » de Baal ?

Mais le fait de la faire venir sur un âne, désigné de surcroît par le terme utilisé dans le rituel d'abattage d'un âne pour la construc-

et s'é(crie) : / "Comment ! La Dame Athir(at Ya)m est arrivée ! / Comment ! La génitrice des di(eux) est venue ! As-tu grand faim, et... (...) ? / Ou as-tu grand soif, et... (...) ? / Mange ou (si tu veux) bois. / Mange à la table (chargée) de nourriture, / bois le vin des hanaps, / dans des coupes d'or le sang végétal. / Ou bien est-ce le membre du roi El qui t'excite ? / Est-ce l'amour du Taureau qui t'éveille ?" ».

²³ D. Pardee fait observer qu'outre la fonction poétique du jeu de répétitions et parallélismes, l'usage de trois noms différents pour cette monture pourraient laisser entendre que l'usage de *ʿr/ʿêru*, celui qui est aussi utilisé dans le texte rituel à propos de l'immolation de l'âne, au lieu du terme administratif commun *hmr/himaru* indiquerait que le premier terme est un vieux mot amorrite (déjà présent dans les textes de Mari du XVIII^e siècle) qui sera peu à peu remplacé dans la langue courante par le second. Et l'âne mâle serait la monture de la déesse alors que l'ânesse porterait les bagages (mais peut-être s'agit-il de la monture d'Anat ?).

tion de la communion et de la paix entre divers groupes en présence, pourrait souligner l'idée d'une ambassade pacifique, non agressive envers celui à qui elle vient présenter sa requête.

La figure de cette femme sur l'âne peut donc évoquer plusieurs connotations tissées ensemble :

- la mission d'ambassade, liée à l'élément d'une mise en route, d'un mouvement volontaire ;
- l'importance sociale, reconnue ou revendiquée, de la protagoniste, face à un personnage masculin représentant une autorité supérieure ;
- le caractère non habituel, voire transgressif du message dont elle est porteuse ;
- mais les intentions pacifiques qui l'animent.

Ces éléments se retrouvent-ils dans d'autres figures de femmes sur des ânes ? Un passage par la glyptique pourrait nous fournir une piste.

b. Un sceau-cylindre trouvé à Ougarit²⁴

J'utilise ici le remarquable inventaire des sceaux-cylindres en hématite et pierres diverses d'Ougarit de P. Amiet²⁵.

On peut repérer qu'une partie de la production, témoignant du caractère interculturel et cosmopolite du site, abondante dans les strates tardives, est de type local populaire pour des sceaux qui ne servaient peut-être même pas à sceller²⁶. Ces sceaux représentent des scènes mythiques qui ne sont pas forcément identifiables précisément mais donnent des éléments sur les représentations du monde présentes dans l'imaginaire collectif des populations présentes à Ougarit.

²⁴ Tous mes remerciements à Valérie Matoïan pour m'avoir signalé ce sceau.

²⁵ Pierre Amiet, *Corpus des Cylindres de Ras Shamra- Ougarit, II, Sceaux-cylindres en hématite et pierres diverses, Ras Shamra – Ougarit IX*, Paris. [publié par la Mission archéologique française de Ras Shamra-Ougarit] 1992.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

S'il existe de nombreuses représentations animales sur ces sceaux à Ougarit, ainsi que des figurations de divinités féminines, parfois ailées, nues ou vêtues debout sur un lion (sceau n°150) ou sur un taureau (sceau n° 146) — une image bien répandue dans le Proche Orient ancien (on pense en particulier à la déesse Ishtar) — les femmes sur les ânes ne sont pas légion... Un seul sceau va ici être retenu.

Dans l'inventaire de P. Amiet, on trouve au n° 149 un sceau particulier présenté comme suit²⁷ :



*Photographie de l'empreinte moderne du sceau-cylindre RS 23.003
(Mission de Ras-Shamra)*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 71-72 pour le commentaire et p. 79 pour le dessin et le cliché.



149. RS 23.003. Damas 2743. Fouilles 1960. Ville Sud. Z. 41. Point topo 2826.
Profondeur : 0,30 m. Ugarit Récent 3. Pierre noirâtre, brûlée. H. : 0,022 m ;
Ø : 0,010 m. Décor en relief plat ; figures silhouettées sans détails précis.

P. Amiet date ce cylindre de la période d'*Ugarit récent 3*, donc à la fin de la période d'occupation de la ville. *Ugarit récent* se situe entre 1550 et 1180. Des tentatives de divisions en trois sous-périodes ont été proposées mais elles sont un peu complexes à utiliser pour les sceaux²⁸.

On note l'influence égyptienne dans la forme des silhouettes mais les personnages sont représentés à plat, sous forme de silhouettes de facture assez grossière. C'est une caractéristique qui permet de faire la différence avec une période classique antérieure,

²⁸ P. Amiet note dans son avant-propos p. 7 : « Cette datation est toujours donnée en référence au système des 3 sous-périodes : *Ugarit Récent 1* (1550-1450) ; *Ugarit Récent 2* (1450-1350) ; *Ugarit Récent 3*, daté tantôt 1350-1250 et tantôt 1350- 1200. (...) Alors que bon nombre de cylindres, même trouvés à faible profondeur, sont datés de l'*Ugarit Récent 2*, nous avons noté avec étonnement le moindre nombre des sceaux-cylindres attribués à la phase finale, *Ugarit Récent 3*, comme si cette dernière n'était pas représentée en de nombreux secteurs du site. Or il semble qu'en réalité, elle ait été celle de l'occupation la plus intense. Et comme les cylindres attribués à cette phase finale sont, par leur style sommaire ou grossier, interchangeables avec ceux des deux phases initiales, il nous a semblé prudent de renoncer à distinguer les trois phases, qui risquent de correspondre le plus souvent à une seule et même période de constructions utilisées et modifiées essentiellement durant les XIV^e et XIII^e siècles ».

dite *Ugarit moyen* témoignant de la civilisation des royaumes amorrites des XVIII^e et XVII^e siècles, où la gravure est d'un style beaucoup plus fin.

La lecture précise de ce sceau est un peu difficile à cause des traits grossiers et le dessin qui en est proposé ne semble pas toujours rapporter très précisément certains traits. Cependant, j'en proposerais l'analyse suivante.

On distingue sur cette scène quatre personnages, deux animaux et trois objets. Ces sceaux étant supposés évoquer des scènes mythologiques, on peut penser que ces personnages sont des divinités.

Le premier personnage à gauche chevauche un équidé reconnaissable à ses oreilles d'âne et sa taille. Ce n'est ni un lion, ni un taureau, ni un chien et n'a pas la tête d'un cheval, je ferai donc l'hypothèse qu'il s'agit d'un âne. Ce personnage porte une coiffure composée d'une coiffe en hauteur, décrit par P. Amiet comme un plumet accompagnée d'un ruban terminé par un globule qui lui descend dans le dos et qui semble caractériser une divinité (on retrouve cette coiffure sur d'autres sceaux). En étudiant la photo (plus que le dessin) on pourrait distinguer une jambe de l'autre côté du corps de l'âne et voir ainsi le personnage chevaucher l'animal en amazone (le sceau 146 montre ce que P. Amiet décrit comme « une déesse installée sur son taureau », également en amazone) ; on ne peut affirmer catégoriquement que ce personnage chevauche un âne en amazone, ce qui renforcerait l'idée d'un personnage féminin, mais on ne peut pas non plus l'exclure. On ne voit aucune délimitation de vêtement, ce qui tendrait à indiquer qu'elle est nue, autre indice d'une déesse. Elle présente à bout de bras un objet identifié comme un bouclier rétréci au milieu (?)²⁹. L'autre bras pend parallèle au corps.

Face à cet équipage se trouve un personnage masculin et puissant, de taille égale au premier, vêtu d'un pagne dont on voit deux (voire trois) extrémités de la ceinture pendre entre ses jambes. Il

²⁹ Le même objet est identifié dans les sceaux 15 (fin période *Ugarit moyen*) et 16 (dans la "maison de Rapanou" fin *Ugarit Récent 2*) commentaire p. 17 et dessin p. 20 (qui représente ce bouclier plus large et strié) dans Pierre Amiet, *Corpus des Cylindres de Ras Shamra- Ugarit, II*.

lève un bras face à l'objet présenté (geste d'accueil ?³⁰), l'autre bras le long du corps.

Il y a donc un parallélisme entre ces deux personnages de gauche. Mais le second est suivi de deux autres, un peu en arrière-plan, plus petits ; d'abord une déesse vêtue et portant la même coiffe en plumet que la première (mais sans ruban ni globule) montée sur un lion passant ; elle présente dans sa main droite un élément végétal, un palmier et tient de sa main gauche un long bâton que saisit également le dernier personnage qui clôt l'ensemble.

On voit donc une scène qui oppose deux mouvements : un mouvement de gauche à droite partant de la divinité sur l'âne, offrant un objet au personnage debout devant elle ; un mouvement de droite à gauche des trois autres personnages, en direction de cette même divinité, le premier accueillant la déesse, les deux autres le protégeant en quelque sorte, tout en brandissant un symbole de fertilité (le palmier) et un de commandement (le bâton).

Faut-il aussi voir un parallélisme antithétique entre deux divinités coiffées, l'une nue assise sur l'âne et l'autre vêtue debout sur un lion ?

La scène n'est pas la même que celle du *Cycle de Baal*, mais on retrouve quelques traits : l'âne suggère un voyage d'une divinité, la coiffure et le ruban renforçant l'importance de son statut ; elle arrive dans un contexte qui met en place une double protection pour le personnage auquel elle s'adresse.

Elle semble offrir un objet, dont on ignore s'il va être accepté. La scène pourrait chercher à saisir ce moment important de la rencontre de la femme sur l'âne avec ses interlocuteurs dans son premier contact, décisif autant que risqué. On pourrait alors faire l'hypothèse que l'image de la divinité assise sur un âne ne véhicule pas les mêmes symboles que la représentation de déesses debout sur un lion ou un taureau, protectrices, mais vindicatives, parfois guerrières.

Elle n'apparaît pas non plus comme le simple parallèle de chefs masculins chevauchant des ânes, symbole de pouvoir et de virilité. Il pourrait y avoir une sorte de reprise et d'accommodation de

³⁰ Y-a-t-il un rapport avec le geste rituel du « lever de la main » précédent la prestation d'un serment devant un dieu rappelé par D. Charpin ? Cf. Dominique Charpin, *Op. cit.*, p. 71.

l'image dans le cas d'un personnage féminin qui semble ainsi conquérir un pouvoir qui ne lui est pas reconnu d'avance, en utilisant la diplomatie et la négociation.

Il est plus difficile de travailler les implications d'une image féminine sur un âne à partir d'un sceau que d'un texte car, comme le note Silvia Schroer, les textes bibliques s'arrêtent sur des détails particuliers dont une représentation par une image aux codes très fixes ne rend pas compte³¹.

C'est avec ces représentations en tête que nous pouvons maintenant passer à la deuxième moitié du premier millénaire, à un moment où Ugarit a été détruite depuis plusieurs siècles, pour relire quelques épisodes de femmes sur un âne dans la bible hébraïque. Ils ne sont pas non plus très nombreux mais offrent des similarités avec les éléments observés jusqu'à présent.

3. Les ânes dans la bible hébraïque

a. Ânes domestiques et ânes sauvages

Dans la bible hébraïque l'âne domestique (*h^amōr*) est en général considéré comme une monture docile, porteuse de lourdes charges. On peut le distinguer en ce sens de l'âne sauvage (*pèrè'*) auquel se rattachent les connotations de force, de liberté (Jb 39,5) : c'est à un âne sauvage, donc indomptable et libre qu'est comparé Ismaël dans la promesse faite à Hagar en Gn 16,12.

Dans les bénédictions de Jacob par contre, en Gn 49,11 ce sont des ânes domestiques qui figurent dans la bénédiction de Juda, l' élu à qui le sceptre ne sera pas retiré, celui à qui tous doivent obéissance :

11 Lui qui attache son âne à la vigne et au cep le petit de son ânesse, il a foulé son vêtement dans le vin et sa tunique dans le sang des grappes.

³¹ Cf. Silvia Schroer, « No woman on the city wall of Hamanu — a note of correction », *Lectio Difficilior* 1/2018, <http://www.lectio.unibe.ch>, p. 2.

On retrouve l'âne et l'ânon (*'ayir*) comme monture d'un personnage qui vient mettre fin aux guerres et proclamer la paix pour les nations (Za 9,9-10) :

9 Tressaille d'allégresse, fille de Sion ! Pousse des acclamations,
fille de Jérusalem ! 10 Voici que ton roi s'avance vers toi ; il est juste et
victorieux, humble, monté sur un âne — sur un ânon tout jeune.

Une autre tribu, celle d'Issacar, est aussi qualifiée d'âne robuste mais cet âne est un âne de bât, astreint à la corvée (Gn 49,14-15). On retrouve par contre une image royale avec des fils de petits juges entourant le récit de Jephté qui chevauchent des ânon (Jg 10,4 et 12,14). Dans les lois sur le rachat des premiers-nés, on notera que l'âne est le seul animal dont il est précisé qu'on n'offre pas le premier-né en sacrifice mais qu'on le "dégage" en offrant à sa place un mouton ou une chèvre (Ex 13,13 ; 34,20). L'âne n'est donc jamais utilisé dans un sacrifice.

L'âne domestique accompagne Abraham, Isaac et les serviteurs dans la première partie de la montée au Mont Moriyya (Gn 22,3-5). C'est aussi avec des ânes que les frères de Joseph descendent en Égypte (Gn 42-43). Il fait partie des biens et du bétail qu'on échange en cadeaux, qu'on se dispute ou qu'on vole (Ex 22,3), qu'on doit ramener quand il s'égare (Ex 23,5), qui doit se reposer durant le shabbat (Ex 20,17).

b. Montures de rois et de prophètes

C'est en partant à la recherche des ânesses perdues de Qish, son père, que Saül va rencontrer le prophète Samuel qui lui donnera l'onction pour être roi (1S 9). C'est aussi avec un âne, chargé de pain, de vin et d'un chevreau que Jessé envoie son fils David auprès de Saül pour jouer de la lyre et le calmer (1S 16,20). En 2S 16, Tsiba, le serviteur de Mephi-Bosheth, fils de Jonathan et petit-fils de Saul vient au devant de David pour le soutenir dans sa lutte contre Absalom. Il arrive avec deux ânes bâtés (*h^abušim*) chargés de provisions et, dit-il, « les ânes serviront de montures à la maison du roi » (2S 16,2). En contre-figure, on peut aussi mentionner Ahitophel,

conseiller d'Absalom qui, voyant que ses conseils n'ont pas été suivis dans sa stratégie de guerre contre David, selle son âne, part pour rentrer chez lui et se pend (2S 17,23).

En 1 Rois 2,40, un autre conflit met en scène le roi Salomon contre Shimei, un Benjaminite qui avait maudit David (2S 16,5-14) et à qui Salomon avait interdit de sortir de Jérusalem. Or, Shimei, apprenant que deux de ses serviteurs se sont enfui à Gath, selle son âne et part chercher ses serviteurs à Gath (1R 2,40). Salomon l'apprend et le fait exécuter.

Un épisode étrange met également en scène un "homme de Dieu" et un vieux prophète de Bethel du temps de Jéroboam, en 1R 13,11-32. L'homme de Dieu vient de Juda prophétiser la destruction du sanctuaire de Béthel et doit repartir sans rien manger ni boire en ce lieu, sur ordre de Yahvé ; mais un vieux prophète monte sur son âne et va le rechercher pour l'inviter chez lui ; l'homme se laisse finalement convaincre par un mensonge du prophète et après le repas le prophète lui selle son âne (*h^amôr*) pour qu'il rentre. Mais sur le chemin il se fait attaquer par un lion qui le tue. Le vieux prophète l'apprend, selle à nouveau un âne, et trouve le cadavre jeté sur le chemin, avec l'âne et le lion se tenant à côté du cadavre (1R 13,28). Il ramène le cadavre sur l'âne et l'ensevelit dans son tombeau.

Et il faut bien sûr mentionner la monture très particulière que représente l'ânesse (*âtôn*) de Balaam en Nb 22,21-34. Dans le cadre d'un conflit, le prophète Balaam doit partir avec les Moabites prophétiser contre Israël en prononçant une malédiction contre eux. Un ange de Yahvé se poste sur le chemin pour l'en empêcher mais seule l'ânesse sur laquelle Balaam est monté le voit ; elle fait un écart pour éviter cet ange armé et menaçant et se fait battre par son maître, par trois fois. Yahvé fait alors parler l'ânesse puis ouvre les yeux de Balaam sur les risques qu'il a couru et dont l'ânesse l'a protégé et le prophète renonce à maudire Israël. Ici c'est l'ânesse elle-même qui inclut le féminin et joue un rôle de clairvoyance et de protection dans un moment dangereux pour son maître.

Jusqu'ici les textes évoqués concernaient les hommes sur des ânes. L'âne est donc généralement soit l'animal de bât soit un symbole porteur de la puissance du chef tribal ; il peut accompagner des messagers de paix. Mais il est aussi inclus dans des scénarios

très conflictuels. Il peut être monté ou accompagner un serviteur, un messager, un prophète, un roi.

Mais il existe encore quelques cas où ce sont des femmes qui apparaissent juchées sur des ânes dans la bible hébraïque et toutes dans des situations assez particulières qui ne sont pas sans rappeler des traits observés plus haut chez les femmes d'Ougarit. Nous allons reprendre ici trois cas particulièrement évocateurs.

4. Les femmes sur les ânes dans la bible hébraïque : trois femmes fortes

a. Aksa

Un premier personnage, peu connu, se trouve au début du livre des Juges, en Jg 1, 10-15³² :

11 De là Juda marcha contre les habitants de Devir — le nom de Devir était auparavant Qiryath-Séfèr. 12 Caleb dit : « Celui qui frappera Qiryath-Séfèr et s'en emparera, je lui donnerai pour femme ma fille Aksa. » 13 Otniel, fils de Qenaz, le frère cadet de Caleb, s'empara de la ville, et Caleb lui donna pour femme sa fille Aksa. 14 Or, dès son arrivée, elle l'incita à demander à son père un champ. Elle descendit de son âne, et Caleb lui dit : « Que veux-tu ? » 15 Elle lui dit : « Fais-moi une faveur. Puisque tu m'as donné une terre du Néguev, donne-moi aussi des vasques d'eau », et Caleb lui donna les vasques d'en haut et les vasques d'en bas³³.

Dans un chapitre (Jg 1) décrivant une série de conquêtes de moins en moins réussies de villes cananéennes par des tribus israélites, l'histoire d'Aksa n'occupe que cinq versets. Elle devient la femme du premier juge libérateur d'Israël, Otniel, donnée en récompense

³² Les citations bibliques sont toutes données selon la Traduction Œcuménique de la Bible (TOB), Paris, Alliance biblique, 2010.

³³ Pour une analyse plus détaillée de ce récit, je me permets de renvoyer à Corinne Lanoir, *Femmes fatales, filles rebelles. Figures féminines dans le livre des Juges (AcR)*, Genève, Labor et Fides, 2005 p. 119-147.

par son père Caleb (chef d'un clan probablement édomite intégré à Juda) à ce valeureux guerrier. Dans un premier temps (v. 11-13) elle n'est donc qu'un objet échangé (son nom pourrait faire référence à un bracelet de cheville, ce qui renforce la connotation « décorative ») à l'intérieur d'un système patriarcal où les décisions sont prises par les hommes de la tribu. Mais la suite de ce petit récit (v. 14-15) offre un renversement intéressant : d'objet, Aksa devient sujet, elle qui a été donnée va trouver son père pour lui dire « donne-moi ». Et l'image de cette transformation est son arrivée sur un âne. Les verbes dont elle devient le sujet dans ces deux versets posent tous des problèmes d'interprétation. Il est d'abord question d'un mouvement, de son arrivée, mais le lieu, les circonstances, le cadre ne sont pas précisés. S'agit-il du moment de son mariage, d'une visite à son père ? Le « elle l'incita » vient d'une racine (exciter, séduire) presque toujours utilisée dans un sens négatif, avec une connotation de tromperie ou de manipulation qui entraîne des catastrophes³⁴. Or ici on ne trouve pas cette connotation, tout se passe bien. De plus ce verbe apparaît dans la LXX au masculin, « il l'incita », où l'on redonne ainsi la main à Otniel, qui, en tant que premier héros et juge modèle, ne peut se laisser manipuler par sa femme.

La mise en route et le trajet sur l'âne ne sont pas décrits, c'est l'arrivée qui est mentionnée. Le verbe traduit par « elle descendit » de son âne est un peu problématique car on ne le trouve, toujours sous cette forme conjuguée de la 3^e féminin singulier, qu'en trois occurrences : dans ce récit, dans son parallèle en Jos 15, et en Jg 4,21 dans l'histoire de Yael, une femme bédouine qui tue Sisera, un chef de guerre, en lui enfonçant un pieu de tente dans la tempe pendant son sommeil. C'est le mouvement descendant du pieu dans la tempe qui est décrit avec le même verbe qu'on traduit chez Aksa par « descendre ». Ici aussi la LXX propose une autre lecture³⁵

³⁴ C'est par exemple le verbe qu'on trouve en 1R 21,25 pour montrer l'emprise de la reine Jézabel sur Achab, ou dans la bouche des ennemis du roi Ézéchias accusé de tromper son peuple en Es 36,18 ou lorsque David est incité par l'Adversaire à faire un recensement (1Ch 21,1).

³⁵ καὶ ἐγόγγυζεν ἐπάνω τοῦ ὑποζυγίου καὶ ἔκραξεν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὑποζυγίου : « et elle grondait sur sa monture et elle cria depuis sa monture » ; la LXX redouble le

en utilisant une autre racine d'un verbe proche graphiquement qui signifie « crier fort », accentuant ainsi le côté revendicatif d'Aksa.

Quoi qu'il en soit, sa descente de l'âne (ou son cri) provoque la réaction de son père et lui permet de faire sa réclamation : il l'a reléguée dans des terres non fertiles, sans eau et elle demande de l'eau. Sa requête sera acceptée par Caleb.

On retrouve donc ici plusieurs éléments attachés à la figure de la femme sur l'âne :

- le voyage sur cette monture est une ambassade pour aller voir quelqu'un qui représente une autorité supérieure ;
- cette ambassade n'est pas une simple visite de courtoisie, elle a pour but une requête vitale pour celle qui la présente dans une forme convenue (mais ici sans prosternation) mais au service d'une profonde contestation des décisions prises par son interlocuteur ;
- l'entretien débouche sur une résolution positive du conflit.

On peut signaler ici un contraste saisissant qui se construit entre le début et la fin du livre des *Juges* : à la figure vivante et parlante d'Aksa sur son âne, qui s'empare un moment d'un pouvoir à côté de son mari et de son père, cherchant bénédiction et fertilité, s'oppose une autre figure au chapitre 19, celle de la concubine du lévite. Suite à une altercation avec lui, cette femme quitte la maison du lévite et repart chez son père. Le lévite vient la chercher avec un serviteur et deux ânes. Après plusieurs jours d'hospitalité plus ou moins forcée, le couple repart, s'arrête passer la nuit à Guibea et là subit l'attaque des habitants. Le lévite livre sa concubine aux hommes du pays qui la violentent toute la nuit. Il la trouve le matin devant la porte, morte ou inconsciente. L'âne est alors chargé du corps violé, torturé et inerte de la concubine, qui sera ensuite découpé par le lévite en douze morceaux envoyés à chaque tribu d'Israël³⁶. Le voyage sur l'âne est ici privé de tout symbole de prise

verbe (*goggúzein* et *krázein*) et substitue au verbe hébreu *ṣānaḥ* du texte massorétique le verbe *ṣwḥ*, crier (cf. Is 42,11). Cf. Paul Harlé, *Les Juges, introduction et notes*, La Bible d'Alexandrie 7, Paris, Cerf, 1999, p. 77.

³⁶ On retrouve ici des traits, poussés à l'extrême, du voyage de la pauvre musicienne enlevée à Agadé...

de pouvoir, il n'y a plus de mise en mouvement autonome, plus de parole, plus de demande, rien de pacifique ; il constitue une sorte de contre-image de corps inerte et dépossédé de tout signe d'existence, qui ne recevra plus rien et sera même nié jusqu'à la désagrégation. Ce sont les morceaux de son corps qui serviront de « message » aux tribus, comme une sorte de convocation à la mobilisation pour une expédition punitive. Cette image-là de femme sur un âne est une sorte de métaphore de la désagrégation d'une société où « chacun fait ce qui semble bon à ses yeux ».

b. Abigaïl, la femme sage d'un mari fou

Le texte de 1S 25,20-43 rapporte une initiative d'Abigaïl, femme de Nabal (un nom construit sur la racine de « folie » traduit ici dans la TOB par infamie). Ce dernier, un éleveur calébite, refuse de soutenir et nourrir David et ses hommes qui vivent dans la montagne, sans terres, à la conquête de la royauté. David en colère projette une expédition punitive chez Nabal. Informée de la situation par un serviteur, Abigaïl charge des ânes de nombreuses provisions et descend au plus vite à la rencontre de David, à l'insu de son mari (1S 25,18-19 montrent l'activité intense du personnage aux moyens de plusieurs verbes d'action), montée sur un âne. Lorsqu'elle l'aperçoit, elle descend de l'âne, se prosterne devant lui et lui adresse ces mots :

23 Apercevant David, Abigaïl se hâta de descendre de l'âne. Elle se jeta face contre terre devant David et se prosterna. 24 Puis elle tomba à ses pieds et dit : « À moi, à moi la faute, mon seigneur ! Puisse ta servante parler à tes oreilles ! Écoute les paroles de ta servante. 25 Que mon seigneur ne fasse pas attention à ce vaurien, à Nabal, car il mérite bien son nom : il s'appelle Infâme, et l'infamie s'attache à lui. Mais moi, ta servante, je n'avais pas vu les garçons de mon seigneur, tes envoyés.

Là aussi la prise de parole contraste avec le geste de prosternation et le ton protocolaires. Par trois fois elle le qualifie de « mon sei-

gneur » et se désigne comme sa « servante ». Mais elle vient rencontrer seule une bande de hors-la-loi avec pour seules armes ses provisions et ses paroles, accuse très librement son mari et négocie la paix avec David dont elle annonce et reconnaît la future royauté. Elle prononce un long discours (v. 24-31) théologique et politique où elle le désigne comme *nagîd*, celui qui conduit le peuple, et obtient sa bénédiction :

33 Béni soit ton bon sens, bénie sois-tu toi-même, pour m'avoir aujourd'hui retenu d'en venir au meurtre et de triompher par ma propre main !

Telle que présentée par les rédacteurs de ce texte, Abigaïl, en résistant à la spirale de violence déclenchée entre les deux groupes d'hommes, permet à David de ne pas compromettre son avenir de roi en se souillant les mains de crimes.

Rentrée chez elle, elle trouve son mari en plein banquet, ivre ; elle lui raconte son expédition le lendemain, ce qui provoque une sorte d'attaque chez Nabal, qui meurt quelques jours plus tard. Cela permettra à David de demander Abigaïl en mariage qui se rend chez son nouvel époux... montée sur un âne :

42 Avigaïl se hâta de partir. Elle monta sur son âne et, accompagnée de cinq de ses servantes, elle suivit les envoyés de David. Ainsi, elle devint sa femme.

C'est alors pratiquement la fin de son existence littéraire dans le cycle de David sauf en une référence en 1S 30 où elle est enlevée avec une autre femme de David par les Amalécites.

Dans la scène de la rencontre avec David, un conflit potentiel est désarmé par une femme qui prend des libertés par rapport au rôle qu'on attend d'elle et à la figure masculine dont elle est censée dépendre. On retrouve l'idée d'un voyage de médiation, d'une prise d'initiative à risque face à un plus puissant qu'elle, d'une situation d'urgence (on retrouve quatre fois le verbe se hâter aux v. 18, 23, 34, 42) et d'une volonté de pacification ; ses paroles et de la nourriture qu'elle distribue aux hommes prêts à partir en guerre, elle en fait ses armes. Son initiative, son pouvoir nourrir et son pouvoir

dire lui confèrent à la fin une reconnaissance et un statut plus important qu'au début.

c. La Shunamite et le prophète

En 2R 4,22-24 une autre femme prend une initiative dans une situation de danger : une Shunamite et son mari accueillent régulièrement le prophète Élisée dans leur maison à Shunem et lui construisent même une chambre ; le couple n'a pas d'enfant mais, après la visite d'Élisée, cette femme va mettre au monde un fils. Quelque temps plus tard se déroule l'épisode suivant :

2R 4,18 L'enfant grandit. Un jour, il alla rejoindre son père auprès des moissonneurs. 19 Il lui dit : « Ma tête ! Ma tête ! » Le père dit à son serviteur : « Porte-le à sa mère ! » 20 Le serviteur l'emporta et le remit à sa mère. L'enfant resta jusqu'à midi sur les genoux de sa mère, puis il mourut. 21 Alors elle monta l'étendre sur le lit de l'homme de Dieu, l'enferma et sortit. 22 Elle appela son mari et dit : « Envoie-moi, je t'en prie, un des serviteurs et une des ânesses ! Je cours jusque chez l'homme de Dieu et je reviens. » 23 Il dit : « Pourquoi veux-tu aller chez lui aujourd'hui ? Ce n'est ni une nouvelle lune ni un sabbat. » Elle répondit : « Ne t'inquiète pas ! » 24 Elle sella l'ânesse et dit à son serviteur : « Conduis-moi, marche et ne m'arrête pas en chemin sans que je te le dise ! » 25 Elle partit et se rendit auprès de l'homme de Dieu au Mont Carmel.

Voici encore une femme qui décide, sans aviser son mari de la situation, de partir, dans une situation critique, consulter un prophète et lui réclamer des explications et un geste face à la mort de son enfant ; notons qu'ici il est spécifié que sa monture est une ânesse (*'âtn*). Lors de sa rencontre avec Élisée, ici encore, si le protocole est respecté, la requête est énoncée de façon très directe :

27 Arrivée à la montagne près de l'homme de Dieu, elle lui saisit les pieds. Guéhazi s'approcha pour la repousser, mais l'homme de Dieu dit : « Laisse-la, car elle est dans l'amertume, et le SEIGNEUR me l'a caché ; il ne m'a pas informé. » 28 Elle dit : « Est-ce moi qui ai demandé

un fils à mon seigneur ? N'avais-je pas dit : "Ne me berce pas d'illusions !" ? »

Élisée envoie d'abord son serviteur au chevet du garçon mais la femme refuse de quitter Élisée qui va alors se rendre dans la maison et ramener le garçon à la vie.

La fin de la scène ne nécessite plus de parole de la femme :

36 Élisée appela Guéhazi et dit : « Appelle cette Shounamite ! » Il l'appela ; elle se rendit près d'Élisée, qui lui dit : « Emporte ton fils ! »
37 Elle vint tomber à ses pieds, se prosterna à terre, puis emporta son fils et sortit.

Ici encore, la requête de la femme sur l'âne est acceptée et la femme retrouve son fils qu'elle avait perdu en allant protester auprès de celui à qui elle reconnaît une autorité prophétique.

Faut-il aussi inclure dans ce dossier l'épisode mystérieux de la femme madianite de Moïse, Zipporah (Ex 4,20-26) ? On y raconte que Moïse fait monter sa femme et ses fils sur un âne (littéralement « l'âne ») pour retourner en Égypte libérer son peuple ; au cours d'une halte de nuit, Yahvé cherche à faire mourir Moïse ; Zipporah le défend en pratiquant un rituel de sang mystérieux entre son fils et son époux³⁷. Zipporah, là encore affronte un danger, mais de nuit, et ce n'est pas au moment de sa descente de l'âne ; de plus il n'y a pas de dialogue, elle ne se mesure pas à un interlocuteur reconnaissable. Le texte est assez obscur³⁸, et on n'y retrouve pas dans sa forme actuelle l'ensemble des éléments repérés dans les trois récits précédents.

On pourrait également se demander pourquoi une ambassadrice comme la reine de Saba (1R 10,1-13), qui vient rendre visite à Salomon, arrive entourée de chameaux mais sans être montée sur

³⁷ Cf. Thomas Römer, « De l'archaïque au subversif : le cas d'Exode 4,24-26 », *ETR* 69/1, 1994, p. 1-12.

³⁸ On pourrait peut-être y voir quelques traces du rituel d'alliance du « toucher de la gorge » tel que décrit par D. Charpin, mais détournées de leur sens par un auteur deutéronomiste qui n'en comprend plus le sens ou ne veut plus le comprendre.

un âne. Il s'agit dans doute d'une autre figure et d'un autre imaginaire. Elle ne se met pas en jeu pour demander un changement de décision de Salomon et n'est pas en conflit avec lui.

Prendre la route sur un âne, prendre la parole, prendre du pouvoir ?

Comme précisé en introduction, il ne s'agit pas de faire du comparatisme à tout crin, ni de chercher un fil direct entre l'ambassade d'Athirat chez El et celle d'Aksa, d'Abigail ou de la Shounamite. Il n'y a pas un modèle littéraire unique et chaque personnage a ses facettes propres.

Ces personnages de la bible hébraïque, quelle que soit leur origine, sont retravaillés par l'écrivain deutéronomiste à l'œuvre dans les livres racontant les débuts de la monarchie d'Israël. Ce sont des femmes et non des déesses, elles ont été en quelque sorte laïcisées. Ceci cadre assez bien avec l'idéologie des théologiens deutéronomistes qui écrivent et modèlent l'histoire de la royauté entre Juges et 2 Rois, eux qui luttent sans cesse contre l'idolâtrie et promeuvent, dans une première phase en tous cas, l'idéologie royale davidique. Mais derrière l'insertion de ces épisodes de femmes sur un âne au service de l'idéologie deutéronomiste, on pourrait voir la persistance d'un imaginaire culturel remontant bien plus haut autour de la femme sur l'âne³⁹.

Le voyage sur un âne n'est pas ordinaire pour ces femmes. Il est une marque à la fois de contestation du pouvoir établi et de prise de pouvoir. Prendre la route avec un âne et prendre la parole en en descendant crée les conditions d'une prise de pouvoir temporaire. Une femme qui descend de son âne en utilisant formellement les

³⁹ Voir l'article tout à fait intéressant sur genre et iconographie, Silvia Schroer, « Gender und Ikonographie — aus der Sicht einer feministischen Bibelwissenschaftlerin », in Silvia Schroer (ed.), *Images and Gender. Contributions to the Hermeneutics of Reading Ancient Art* (OBO 220), Freiburg CH/Göttingen, 2006, p. 107-124, en particulier p. 112-116. S. Schroer traite également des trois personnages de femmes sur l'âne étudiés ici en soulignant l'importance de la mobilité que donne le fait d'avoir une monture, ce qui permet à ces femmes, plutôt aisées, d'élargir leur champ d'action en chevauchant des ânes et d'indiquer leur souveraineté.

codes de la bienséance face à celui à qui elle est venue demander quelque chose n'effectue pas une simple visite protocolaire avec des marques de soumission. Elle se met en danger mais gagne de la reconnaissance et s'octroie un réel pouvoir dans la situation qu'elle souhaite résoudre, non pas par l'affrontement mais par la médiation. Le fait de la mettre sur un âne lui donne littérairement un statut, un pouvoir et une mission d'ambassadrice déterminée mais pacifique. On remarquera aussi que dans les cas bibliques il y a un aspect de liminalité, donné par le statut à priori un peu marginal de la femme en question issue de zones ou de milieux plutôt périphériques (calébite, shunamite).

On pourrait donc peut-être voir un fil persistant dans ces représentations-là qui posent une lecture de la réalité un peu alternative par rapport à l'image classique de l'homme chevauchant un âne. Ceci n'est qu'une première approche et reste de l'ordre d'une hypothèse à affiner. Si d'autres éléments viennent s'ajouter à ce dossier, la piste pourra être creusée.

Habitat, bâti et aménagements ruraux dans la plaine de Ras Shamra au début du XX^e siècle

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Abstract. *One of the means at our disposal to reveal past realities is the use of archives, particularly old photographs, writings of travelers or scholars (here since the late seventeenth century) and old maps. This documentary corpus, and especially photographs taken in the 1930s over the Ras Shamra region, in the Latakia's sahel, allows us to visualize and analyze ancient spatial organizations that are difficult to detect today because of great changes in vegetation and growth of urban areas. Landscape archeology offers us a key to reading territories where vestiges are potentially numerous, ancient; it allows us to understand factors for the location of sites. The work focused on the organization of built space and the development of plain before the major landscape changes that took place in the second half of the twentieth century. It turns out that, at the beginning of the twentieth century, inhabited sites were few, mostly consisting of small villages or hamlets and rare isolated farms, close to natural water points. Buildings remain modest and their construction reflects resources available locally: abundance of stone and relative scarcity of wood. Agricultural development mainly takes place in a space close to the habitat: areas to beat, oil presses, saqiya wells or small canals. River developments, which remain localized however, are the only ones to present some scale.*

Introduction

Comme les autres régions du pourtour méditerranéen, le Levant a connu des évolutions économiques rapides au cours du XX^e siècle, en particulier avec l'aménagement de la façade maritime après les indépendances. Leurs conséquences sur l'occupation du sol, l'organisation de l'espace et les paysages sont encore peu étudiées, surtout si on compare avec la partie occidentale du bassin.

L'archéologie du paysage est alors intéressante à plusieurs titres car elle permet de restituer des organisations spatiales anciennes, très difficiles à détecter aujourd'hui, notamment à cause des changements du couvert végétal, des conversions culturelles ou de l'étalement des nappes urbaines¹. Dans le cadre de recherches archéologiques, cette approche peut donner des clefs de lecture pour des territoires où les vestiges sont potentiellement nombreux ou très anciens ; elle peut en particulier permettre de comprendre certains facteurs de localisation des sites².

L'étude a pour terrain la plaine de Ras Shamra, appelée également Sahel de Lattaquié. Cette plaine, développée sur des affleurements de craie miocène mais largement couverte de sédiments quaternaires, s'étend au Nord de cette ville portuaire en étant limitée vers l'est par les premières pentes du plateau de Bahlouliyé. Les altitudes, proches du niveau de la mer dans la partie sud et aux environs immédiats de Lattaquié, s'élèvent graduellement vers le nord en direction des contreforts du massif du Baer-Bassit. Le Sahel devient alors un bas plateau, bordé sur le littoral par une côte à falaises. Le réseau hydrographique, constitué au sud de petits oueds divaguant sur les basses terres, s'incise et se hiérarchise alors plus nettement, avec les vallées du Nahr el-Arab et du Nahr el-Kandil. Ce dernier matérialise la limite septentrionale du Sahel.

L'objectif est de restituer ici l'organisation de l'espace bâti et les modes d'aménagement de la plaine avant les grands changements paysagers qui sont intervenus dans la seconde moitié du XX^e siècle. Des écrits de voyageurs ou de savants qui ont parcouru ou étudié

¹ Nicolas Jacob-Rousseau et Bernard Geyer, « La campagne aux alentours de Ras Shamra vue au travers des documents d'archive, de la fin du XVII^e siècle au début du XXI^e », in *Archéologie, patrimoine et archives II*, éd. par V. Matoïan, Ras Shamra – Ougarit XXVI, Leuven, Éditions Peeters, 2019, p. 191-221 ; Bernard Geyer, Nicolas Jacob-Rousseau et Marie-Laure Chambrade, « La géographie d'un royaume levantin », in *Catalogue d'exposition : Ougarit entre Orient et Occident*, dir. par V. Matoïan et T. Römer, Mission archéologique syro-française de Ras Shamra – Collège de France, 2016, p. 18-19 ; Nicolas Jacob-Rousseau et Bernard Geyer, « Lire les paysages depuis le ciel ou comment les géographes restituent les environnements du passé », in *Catalogue d'exposition : Ougarit entre Orient et Occident*, dir. par V. Matoïan et T. Römer, Mission archéologique syro-française de Ras Shamra – Collège de France, 2016, p. 56-57.

² Jesse Casana et Jackson Cothren, « Stereo analysis, DEM extraction and orthorectification of CORONA satellite imagery », *Antiquity* 82, p. 732-749.

cette région depuis la fin du XVII^e siècle, des photographies (vues au sol ou aériennes) ou des cartes datant des premières décennies du XX^e siècle constituent le corpus documentaire sur lequel nous nous sommes appuyés. Ces sources, décrites en détail dans un précédent article, sont présentées ici dans deux tableaux synthétiques. Nous mentionnerons surtout le fonds C. Schaeffer, conservé au Collège de France. Il renferme de nombreux clichés des environs du site de Ras Shamra (Ougarit) et en particulier plus d'une centaine de plaques de verre prises, à la demande de l'archéologue, par des aviateurs du 32^e Régiment d'aviation du Levant, entre 1930 et 1939. Ces documents d'une qualité exceptionnelle permettent une connaissance approfondie du paysage des alentours du tell et des éléments qui le constituaient dans les années 1930.

Tableau 1. Sources photographiques ; pour chaque série, nous n'avons indiqué que le nombre de clichés couvrant tout ou partie de la région étudiée.

Fonds	Lieu de conservation	Date	Nature	Nombre de clichés
Fonds C. Schaeffer	Collège de France	1930-1939	Vues aériennes obliques et verticales	114
			Vues au sol	Plusieurs dizaines
32 ^e Régiment d'aviation de l'Armée du Levant	IGN (Saint-Mandé) et Université de Nanterre	1932	Vues aériennes verticales	19
Couverture photographique aérienne syrienne	IFPO	1958	Vues aériennes verticales	166
Fonds du programme CORONA, archives déclassifiées (E.-U.)	EROS Data Center, U.S. Geological Survey, Sioux Falls, South Dakota	1968-1969	Clichés satellitaires	15

	http://earth-explorer.usgs.gov			
Fonds Albert Kahn « Les archives de la planète »	Boulogne-Billancourt	1920-1925	Vues au sol	4
Mission Ras Shamra – Ougarit	Divers	1990-2011	Vues au sol	Plusieurs dizaines
Google Earth	w.w.w.	2004-2018	Images satellitales	Plusieurs dizaines

Tableau 2. Récits de voyage et monographies savantes retenus pour cette étude.

Auteur	Titre de l'ouvrage	Date de publication	Nature et date du voyage
Henry Maundrell (1665-1701)	<i>Voyage d'Alep à Jérusalem à Pâques en l'année 1697</i>	1705	Récit de voyage (1697)
Richard Pococke (1704-1765)	<i>A Description of the East, and Some other Countries, vol. II part I, Observations on Palestine or the Holy Land, Syria, Mesopotamia, Cyprus, and Candia</i>	1745	Récit de voyage (1737 ?)
Guillaume-Antoine Olivier (1756-1814)	<i>Voyage dans l'empire ottoman, l'Égypte et la Perse, fait par ordre du gouvernement, pendant les six premières années de la République, avec atlas</i>	1801-1807	Récit de voyage (1794-1795)
Louis-Alexandre-Olivier De Co-rancez (1770-1832)	<i>Itinéraire d'une partie peu connue de l'Asie Mineure</i>	1816	Récit de voyage (jusqu'à fin 1812)

Louis Lortet (1836-1909)	<i>La Syrie d'aujourd'hui</i>	1880- 1882	Récit de voyage (1875- 1878)
Anonyme	<i>Un peuple qui ressuscite : « l'État des Alaouites »</i>	1929	Vulgarisation
Claude Schaeffer (1898-1982)	<i>A New Alphabet of the Ancients is unearthed. An Inconspicuous Mound in Northern Syria Yields Archeological Treasures of Far- reaching Significance</i>	1930	Vulgarisation
Georges Chenet (1881-1951)	<i>Le tourisme en pays Alaouite. La nouvelle route Lattaquié- Antioche</i>	1932	Vulgarisation
Jacques Weulersse (1905-1946)	<i>Le pays des Alaouites</i>	1940	Thèse de géo- graphie
Jacques Weulersse (1905-1946)	<i>Paysans de Syrie et du Proche- Orient</i>	1946	Étude scienti- fique
Ibrahim Nahal (1933-...)	<i>Contribution à l'étude de la végé- tation dans le Baer-Bassit et le Djebel Alaouite de Syrie</i>	1962	Thèse d'agro- nomie
Talal Akili	<i>Die Syrische Küstengebiete. Eine Modelluntersuchung zur Region- alplanung in den Entwicklungs- ländern</i>	1968	Thèse de géographie
Eugen Wirth (1925-2012)	<i>Syrien, eine geographische Landeskunde</i>	1971	Étude scienti- fique

L'ensemble de ces informations révèle que, au début du XX^e siècle, les sites habités étaient peu nombreux, majoritairement constitués de petites bourgades ou de hameaux et de rares fermes isolées, tous proches des points d'eau naturels. Les bâtiments restent alors de taille modeste et leur mode de construction reflète les ressources disponibles localement : abondance de la pierre et rareté relative du bois. La majeure partie des aménagements agricoles se déploie dans un espace proche de l'habitat : aires à battre, pressoirs, puits

à *saqiya* ou petits canaux. Quelques aménagements du réseau hydrographique, qui restent toutefois localisés, sont les seuls à présenter quelque envergure.

1. Bourgades, hameaux et fermes : un habitat tourné vers la terre

Dans les années 1930, les lieux habités aux environs de Ras Shamra se limitent à quelques bourgades (Bisnada, Damsarko, Kanjra, Kirsana et Chamié), quelques hameaux (Zekeskanié, Ibn Hani, Mqaté, Ouadi Jhannam) et des fermes disséminées dans une partie de la plaine (figure 1). Certaines forment de petites nébuleuses à proximité des hameaux ou des bourgs ou plus loin dans la plaine. D'autres sont en position d'écart. À cela s'ajoutent quelques sanctuaires (appelés *mazar* – plur. *mazarat* – ou *weli*), certains étant juchés sur de petites éminences du terrain.

À l'exception de Lattaquié, l'espace bâti occupe donc une superficie très faible. On observe aussi une absence presque totale de lien direct avec le littoral. Ibn Hani, qui ne comprend que quelques maisons, est le seul hameau situé sur la côte et où il y a une vie maritime. Damsarko est l'unique bourgade implantée dans la plaine, à basse altitude. Tout l'habitat groupé est retiré dans l'arrière-pays, sur les premières pentes. Au-delà de la première ligne de bourgs qui dominent le chemin de Lattaquié à Antioche, entre Bisnada et Kirsana, on rencontre en effet d'autres villages qui occupent tous des promontoires ou des positions hautes sur le plateau de Bahlouliyé.

Georges Chenet, collaborateur de Claude Schaeffer, évoque ce paysage en quelques mots : « parmi les pépinières défendues par de hautes clôtures de cactus à raquettes, des fermes apparaissent et les maisons de Damsarko »³, puis, lorsqu'il poursuit son itinéraire au nord, « vers la gauche, Chamié laisse voir, issue d'un bosquet, la coupole du saint *weli*... »⁴. Il traduit bien une réalité disparue de nos jours : au début du XX^e siècle, l'habitat est circonscrit et

³ Georges Chenet, « Le tourisme en pays Alaouite. La nouvelle route Lattaquié-Antioche », *Terre Air Mer – La Géographie*, 1932, p. 164.

⁴ Chenet, « Le tourisme en pays Alaouite », p. 169.

l'arbre ne couvre pas encore la presque totalité de la plaine. Les vergers sont déjà présents à proximité des principaux bourgs ou hameaux, en particulier autour de Damsarko (photo 1).

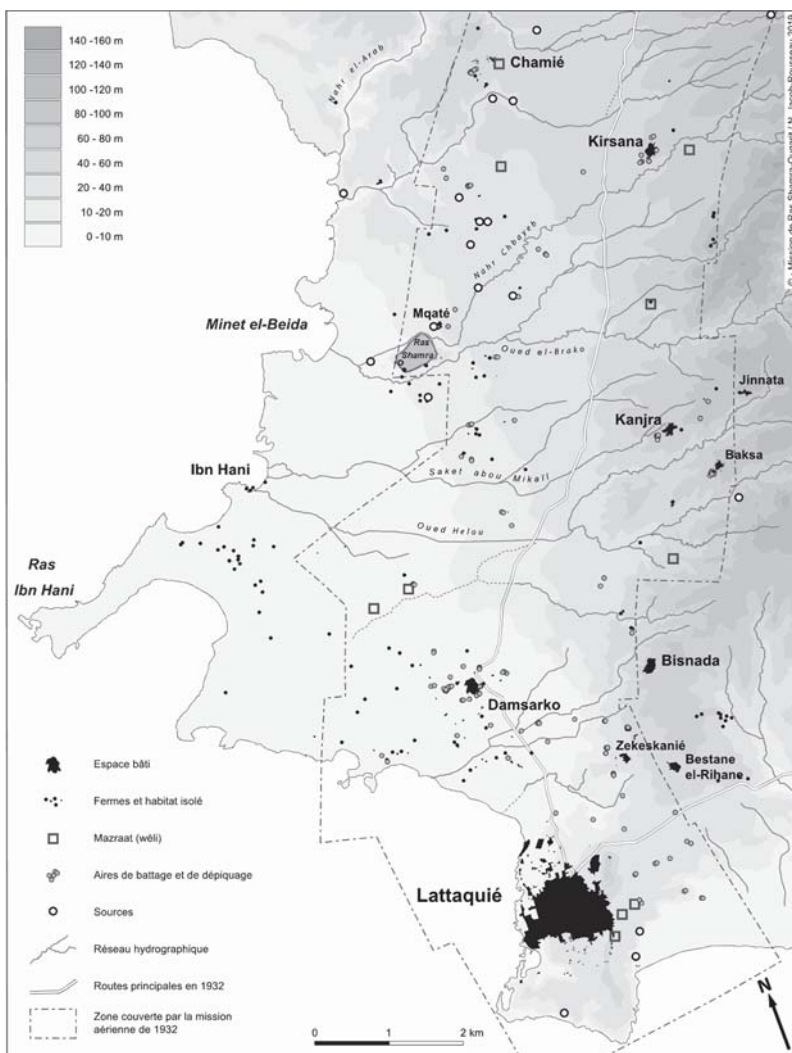


Figure 1. Formes et répartition de l'habitat, localisation des sources et d'aménagements liés à la céréaliculture dans le sahel de Lattaquié dans les années 1930 (© Mission de Ras Shamra, réalisation et infographie N. Jacob-Rousseau).

Mais, s'il semble qu'ils appartiennent déjà au paysage depuis plusieurs siècles, la progression de leurs surfaces est un phénomène récent dans les années 1930⁵.



Photo 1. L'occupation du sol autour de Damsarko en 1932 : nombreuses plantations anciennes et récentes, permanence de la céréaliculture signalée par les aires à battre près du bourg et des fermes (© IGN, mission de la « Route de Lattaquié à Antioche », 32^e Régiment d'aviation de l'Armée du Levant, cliché n° 70. Traitement numérique et infographie G. Devilder).

Plusieurs facteurs explicatifs peuvent être évoqués pour rendre compte de cette organisation spatiale.

- Le rôle des sources est essentiel, qui fixent une partie de l'habitat, qu'il s'agisse de hameaux ou de fermes isolées (figure 1). L'écoulement superficiel est en effet uniquement saisonnier dans la plaine⁶ et au printemps les oueds tarissent en général

⁵ Jacques Weulersse, *Le pays des Alaouites*, Institut français de Damas, Tours, Arrault, 1940 ; Nicolas Jacob-Rousseau et Bernard Geyer, « Des paysages du nord du Levant révélés par les photographies aériennes : l'apport du fonds Claude Schaeffer », in *Archéologie, patrimoine et archives I, Les fouilles anciennes à Ras Shamra et à Minet el-Beida*, éd. par V. Matoïan, Ras Shamra – Ougarit XXV, Leuven, Éditions Peeters, 2017, p. 349-378.

⁶ Seuls les principaux *nahrs* sont pérennes, tels que le Nahr el-Kébir qui ferme notre région au sud et les Nahr el-Arab et Nahr el-Kandil au nord.

pour de longs mois. Ce sont alors les nombreuses sources, pour la plupart pérennes, qui permettent aux populations de subsister durant la longue période sèche estivale. Elles sont pour la plupart alimentées à partir des hauteurs environnantes et bénéficient de l'infiltration des eaux dans le karst du Djebel Ansariyé, lequel constitue un énorme château d'eau qui stocke les précipitations hivernales et les restitue peu à peu aux plaines environnantes. Peut-être la qualité des eaux potables joue-t-elle aussi un rôle dans la mesure où Louis Lortet signale que « [à Lattakièh] l'eau de source est rare et de mauvaise qualité. Les habitants qui désirent boire de la bonne eau l'envoient chercher, tous les jours, à une lieue et demie, à Bisanada. Cet endroit est situé au nord de la ville, et l'eau en est rapportée dans de grandes amphores attachées aux flancs des ânes. »⁷.

- Les oueds ont pu être également un facteur limitant. Comme nous l'avons évoqué dans une publication⁸, le réseau hydrographique montre de nombreux signes d'instabilité des chenaux, que nous évoquerons plus loin, ce qui a pu écarter l'habitat sédentaire de certains secteurs de la plaine à toutes les époques où la société locale n'a pas cherché à contraindre ou à orienter les écoulements. Enfin, il convient de faire également la part des conditions sanitaires : le paludisme est attesté par les voyageurs et les autorités mandataires tout au long des trois derniers siècles. Ce risque est certainement lié au régime des oueds et aux faibles pentes longitudinales. Ces derniers permettent la formation de mares stagnantes au début de la saison sèche, ce qui favorise le développement des larves de moustiques.
- La proximité de Lattaquié et de l'économie commerciale.

Le lien très fort entre la présence de vergers et les sites d'habitat invite à voir dans les premiers un possible élément de datation des seconds, au moins pour partie. D'une part, des fermes isolées semblent récentes (fin XIX^e siècle – début XX^e avec l'essor des vergers

⁷ Louis Charles Émile Lortet, *La Syrie d'aujourd'hui. Voyages dans la Phénicie, le Liban et la Judée. 1875-1880, 1884*, p. 165.

⁸ Jacob-Rousseau et Geyer, « La campagne aux alentours de Ras Shamra », p. 191-221.

et des plantations), d'autre part les progrès de la mise en culture et de l'habitat autour du tell de Ras Shamra entre 1930 et 1939 sont bien identifiables sur les clichés du fonds Schaeffer (Service des archives du Collège de France). Ce développement, qui s'est poursuivi jusqu'à nos jours, trouve très probablement son origine dans la croissance du port de Lattaquié. Henry Maundrell, à la fin du XVII^e siècle, attribue au négoce le fait que Lattaquié soit « devenue la ville la plus florissante de la côte »⁹. Richard Pococke, qui visite la région dans la première moitié du XVIII^e siècle, souligne l'importance du commerce d'exportation du tabac, du coton et de la soie brute ou grège (*raw silk*) dans le développement de Lattaquié et de sa proche région¹⁰. Jacques Weulersse établit d'ailleurs un lien entre l'investissement citadin dans les cultures d'exportation et la croissance que connaît Damsarko dans la première moitié du XX^e siècle¹¹. Cette dernière agglomération a la particularité d'être à la fois la seule de la plaine qui atteigne la taille d'un bourg et la plus proche de Lattaquié¹².

Hormis dans le cas particulier de cette cité portuaire, se dégage des récits des voyageurs ou des savants l'impression d'ensemble d'une relative léthargie économique et même d'une certaine dépopulation, tant dans certaines bourgades de l'intérieur des terres que dans les villes de la côte. R. Pococke note comme d'autres la

⁹ Henry Maundrell, *Voyage d'Alep à Jérusalem à Pâques en l'année 1697*, publié à Autrecht en 1705, traduit de l'anglais : *Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem at Easter A.D. 1697, 1705*, p. 18.

¹⁰ Richard Pococke, *A Description of the East, and Some Other Countries, Vol. II Part I, Observations on Palestine or the Holy Land, Syria, Mesopotamia, Cyprus, and Candia*, Londres, 1745, p. 197.

¹¹ Weulersse, *Le pays des Alaouites*, 1940.

¹² Selon Georges Chenet, Lattaquié est, au début des années 1930, « une ville saine et agréable de 25.000 habitants » (Chenet, « Le tourisme en pays Alaouite », p. 162). Elle aurait compté 45.000 habitants au début des années 1960 (*Les Guides bleus, Moyen Orient*, 1965, p. 364). Cette croissance rapide aurait marqué la population de l'ensemble des villes côtières syriennes, tout particulièrement à partir de 1950 (Talal Akili, *Die Syrische Küstengebiete. Eine Modelluntersuchung zur Regionalplanung in den Entwicklungsländern*, Kiepert Verlag, Berlin, 1968, p. 16. Elle est à imputer à l'exode rural qui a caractérisé la montagne à cette époque (Eugen Wirth, *Syrien, eine geographische Landeskunde*, Wissenschaftliche Länderkunden 4/5, Darmstadt, 1971, p. 366.

faible activité maritime sur tout ce littoral : « *Gabala [...] is at present a poor miserable town, thinly inhabited, without any trade* »¹³. Si les multiples anses qui échancrent la côte entre Lattaquié et le massif du Jebel Akra (le Mont Cassius des anciens) se prêtent aisément au cabotage local, on n'y trouve aucun établissement d'importance notable. La côte est par ailleurs très peu peuplée au nord de notre secteur d'étude.

2. Bâti et matériaux de construction

L'habitat, au début du XX^e siècle, reflète les conditions économiques et reste étroitement tributaire d'un approvisionnement local en matériaux de construction. Il diffère fortement des bâtisses qui, à partir de l'après-guerre et grâce à l'usage de matériaux produits par l'industrie, ont uniformisé l'habitat rural levantin et effacé les formes architecturales anciennes.

« En face, dans la falaise calcaire, parmi la verdure, se juchent, cubiques, ternes ou éblouissantes suivant les heures, les habitations de Zekeskanie et de Bisnada, puis celles de Baqsa et de Kanjra, le village aux “cent jarres” d'huile »¹⁴. Plus loin, « sur la croupe, à droite, se profilent, blanches même sur la blancheur de la craie, les murailles de Kallouf et d'Aïn el Beïda. »¹⁵. Ainsi G. Chenet exprime-t-il sa vision du paysage rural sur la route qui, sortant de Lattaquié au nord, conduit aux abords de Ras Shamra. Cette peinture de la campagne lattaquiotte exprime ici la recherche et même la promotion d'un certain dépaysement mais, peut-être un peu idéalisée, elle rend incomplètement compte des réalités rurales de l'époque.

Cubique, la maison l'est indubitablement. Tous les clichés disponibles montrent des édifices à toit plat, limités très souvent à un rez-de-chaussée (photo 2). L'étage, lorsqu'il existe, n'occupe qu'une petite partie du bâti sous-jacent. Les maisons rurales sont généralement faites de plusieurs petites unités contiguës, qui s'agencent pour former une cour qu'achèvent de clore des murs

¹³ Pococke, *A Description of the East*, p. 198.

¹⁴ Chenet, « Le tourisme en pays Alaouite », p. 164.

¹⁵ Chenet, « Le tourisme en pays Alaouite », p. 164.

assez élevés. Les toitures sont souvent faites de branchages recouverts de terre battue ; une partie seulement, la terrasse du corps principal, est enduite de mortier pour faciliter l'écoulement et la récupération des eaux pluviales. Ordinairement, seules les façades du logis sont chaulées ; les dépendances, étables, remises ou bâtiments agricoles exposent leurs murs simplement enduits, sans autre apprêt. Les bâtisses urbaines de Lattaquié, bien plus soignées, sont plus souvent pourvues d'un étage et de grandes ouvertures mais le bâti reste dense et constitué de nombreuses petites unités juxtaposées. Dans les années 1920-1930, presque toutes les toitures sont encore des terrasses aux surfaces soigneusement recouvertes d'un enduit imperméable qui permet de recueillir les eaux de pluie et les diriger vers des citernes, essentielles dans cette agglomération dépourvue de cours d'eau pérenne. Les photos montrent que le développement des toits à couverture de tuiles n'en est qu'à ses débuts (photo 3). Comme au Liban, il signale le relatif enrichissement de certains citadins qui adoptent de nouvelles modes architecturales et la tuile mécanique produite à Marseille.



Photo 2. Le hameau de Mqaté en juin 1937. Au premier plan les fouilles sur le tell ; sur l'autre rive du nahr Chbayyeb, les vergers et jardins ; le hameau est bâti sur une crête de ramleh ; à l'arrière-plan, la plaine avec les cultures labourées (© Mission de Ras Shamra, fonds C. Schaeffer, Service des archives du Collège de France. Traitement numérique et infographie G. Devilder).



Photo 3. Lattaquié le 27 octobre 1921, « Panorama de la ville vers la colline, au sud », autochrome de Frédéric Gadmer (© Musée Albert-Kahn - Département des Hauts-de-Seine).

L'habitat rural reste modeste ; il paraît même étriqué et limité au strict nécessaire si l'on en croit le témoignage de certains voyageurs. Guillaume Antoine Olivier, qui juge lors de son séjour que les maisons de Lattaquié sont plutôt solidement bâties, note à son passage à Bahlouliyé que le village est « presque dépeuplé et à moitié ruiné » et que les étrangers qui y avaient élu résidence « l'ont abandonné ensuite pour un quartier situé à une lieue au nord de Latakia¹⁶, où l'air est bon, où ils jouissent de la vue de la mer, et où ils sont plus à portée de leurs affaires ». Lorsqu'il cherche à se loger à cette étape, il est conduit « chez un homme [...] dont la maison ne consistait qu'en une seule chambre, occupée par toute sa famille »¹⁷. Henry Maundrell, sur son itinéraire d'Alep à Jérusalem,

¹⁶ Il s'agit de Bisnada, dont l'altitude préserve de l'impaludation et qui possède en outre une bonne source que signale Louis Lortet (*La Syrie d'aujourd'hui*, 1884).

¹⁷ Guillaume Antoine Olivier, *Voyage dans l'empire ottoman, l'Égypte et la Perse, fait par ordre du gouvernement, pendant les six premières années de la République*, tome IV, *Voyage en Syrie et en Mésopotamie*, 1807, p. 145.

indique qu'à son arrivée, « à *Sholfatia*, pauvre village, [...] les maisons étoient insupportables, les habitants & le bétail y étant logez pêle mêle »¹⁸ et qu'il fallut chercher à se loger dans un *weli*. À son époque, les voyageurs ont recours autant que possible aux khans qui sont construits de loin en loin sur les itinéraires. Il n'en existe cependant pas sur les routes de moindre importance, ce qui explique peut-être que la plupart des voyageurs qui traversent cette contrée entre la fin du XVII^e siècle et le début du XX^e siècle passent presque tous par les mêmes chemins¹⁹.

Seule exception, notée par Louis-Alexandre-Olivier de Corancez, « à Bisnada, village peu éloigné de Latakié, sont les restes d'une vaste habitation qu'un riche négociant anglais y fit construire, il y a un siècle... »²⁰. La petitesse et l'inconfort de l'habitat sont sans doute à rechercher dans les structures sociales et foncières. Quoique ces dernières soient bien moins inégalitaires qu'ailleurs en Syrie²¹, nombre d'habitants des hameaux ou des petits villages sont les métayers d'un grand propriétaire-citadin ou d'un agriculteur plus aisé. La classe paysanne reste donc modeste, sinon pauvre, surtout dès que l'on s'éloigne de Lattaquié et que diminue l'investissement des capitaux citadins dans les cultures.

À ces considérations économiques, il faut ajouter la question des matériaux de construction. Comme nous l'avons évoqué plus haut, le bois est rare dans la plaine et Ibrahim Nahal rappelle le déboisement millénaire de cet espace plan aux sols faciles à cultiver²². Selon cet auteur, le caroubier (*Ceratonia siliqua*) et le lentisque (*Pistacia lentiscus*) constituent les peuplements arborés spontanés entre le niveau de la mer et 200 à 300 mètres d'altitude²³. Or ces

¹⁸ Henry Maundrell, *Voyage d'Alep à Jérusalem à Pâques en l'année 1697*, p. 13-14.

¹⁹ Jacob-Rousseau et Geyer, « La campagne aux alentours de Ras Shamra », p. 194, fig. 1.

²⁰ Louis-Alexandre-Olivier de Corancez, *Itinéraire d'une partie peu connue de l'Asie mineure, contenant la description des régions septentrionales de la Syrie*, 1816, p. 59.

²¹ Jacques Weulersse, *Le pays des Alaouites*, p. 226.

²² Ibrahim Nahal, *Contribution à l'étude de la végétation dans le Baer-Bassit et le Djebel Alaouite de Syrie*, Webbia 16/2, 1962, p. 507.

²³ Nahal, *Contribution à l'étude de la végétation*, p. 610-611.

deux essences à feuilles persistantes, par leur croissance lente, répondent médiocrement aux besoins en bois pour des usages courants. Quelques conifères (cyprès) et feuillus (peupliers) peuvent fournir des poutres ou des planches, mais leur nombre est très limité : ils ne se rencontrent que près des hameaux et des sources (photo 2) et, comme le note J. Weulersse, leurs « troncs droits sont particulièrement appréciés pour la construction en ce pays d'arbres rares »²⁴. La chênaie (*Quercus calliprinos*) n'apparaît qu'au-dessus de 300 m d'altitude, et encore de façon très résiduelle²⁵. I. Nahal mentionne en effet les bosquets de chênes (*Quercus calliprinos*) parfois pluricentenaires qui flanquent les lieux saints (*mazarat* ou *weli*) situés sur les pentes de la montagne toute proche et qui témoignent selon lui d'un boisement autrefois plus étendu²⁶.

Cet argument fait que l'on ne doit donc pas exclure que même le *Ceratonieto-Lentiscetum* du bas pays soit issu d'une évolution régressive très poussée, comme sur d'autres littoraux méditerranéens, où les prélèvements pour le combustible ou la construction ont éliminé les arbres à feuilles caduques et parfois jusqu'aux chênes sempervirents²⁷. Cette pénurie de bois est indirectement révélée par une remarque de G. Chenet : « sur les troncs noueux de vénérables oliviers sèchent, plaqués, des gâteaux de bouse, combustible pour l'hiver à venir »²⁸.

Les clichés du fonds Schaeffer comme les vues aériennes de 1932 révèlent en effet que, pour l'essentiel, la végétation ligneuse spontanée n'occupe que de faibles surfaces, sous la forme soit de petits bosquets, soit de couverts très clairsemés ou d'un semis d'individus isolés (figure 2). L'observation attentive des clichés suggère aussi que ces végétaux sont presque tous de faible hauteur : les ombres projetées sont très courtes alors que le survol de 1932 a été effectué en début de matinée. Par ailleurs, la végétation est rare même à proximité des points d'eau. La ripisilve est à proprement parler absente le long des oueds. Les formations végétales y sont

²⁴ Jacques Weulersse, 1940, p. 212.

²⁵ Nahal, *Contribution à l'étude de la végétation*, p. 527-528.

²⁶ Nahal, *Contribution à l'étude de la végétation*, p. 528 et 600.

²⁷ Jean Louis Vernet, *L'homme et la forêt méditerranéenne, de la Préhistoire à nos jours*, Éditions Errance, 1997.

²⁸ Chenet, « Le tourisme en pays Alaouite », p. 164.

majoritairement des fourrés ou des roselières, très discontinus (photo 2). Encore ne sont-ils vraiment présents que le long du Nahr el-Arab, du Nahr Chbayyeb et de l'oued el-Brako. Les autres branches du réseau hydrographique sont presque complètement dépourvues de ligneux (photo 4). Dans la plaine et sur les pentes qui l'encadrent, on peut identifier, çà et là, quelques bosquets. Ils occupent généralement des superficies très réduites, comme autour des petits sanctuaires qui ont été mentionnés plus haut. Seule exception, semble-t-il, une grande zone de broussailles est portée sur la carte topographique de 1928 à proximité de la côte. Sa position assez distante de sites d'habitat pourrait expliquer le maintien des ligneux. En l'absence de photographie de ce secteur, il est difficile de savoir précisément quel pouvait être la physionomie de la végétation. Cependant des clichés pris par C. Schaeffer un peu plus au nord, à Ras el-Bassit, présentent des formations très clairsemées et à port bas et on peut faire l'hypothèse qu'il en était de même sur ce cap. Partout ailleurs, les ligneux ne sont présents que sous la forme de semis d'arbres ou de buissons. De surcroît, on ne peut pas exclure que certains arbres soient des fruitiers isolés, ce qui réduirait encore le nombre des individus non plantés. Rien de surprenant, dans ces conditions, à ce que les bâtiments soient petits, de faible largeur, dimensions contraintes par l'absence de bois aptes à faire des poutres de longue portée. Les maisons de Mqaté, souvent présentes au second plan sur les clichés du tell, en sont un bon exemple, mais aussi les maisons de fouilles que C. Schaeffer fit édifier pour son équipe sur la dune de Minet el-Beida (photo 5).

Les matières minérales dominent donc dans les édifices, comme presque partout ailleurs au Levant. Dans le secteur de Ras Shamra, les crêtes de grès dunaire, une calcarénite appelée localement *ramleh*, sont des sites d'extraction privilégiés car cette pierre se débite aisément en gros moellons, comme la craie miocène qui affleure sur le littoral ou sur les premiers reliefs. Les clichés du fonds Schaeffer ou du 32^e régiment d'aviation montrent ces carrières à plusieurs reprises, de même que celles qui sont sur le littoral (figure 2, photos 1 et 2). Si l'on en juge par quelques notations de voyageurs, qui signalent çà ou là l'utilisation d'une colonne ancienne pour soutenir les structures d'un « puit arabe », le remploi

de pierres antiques est sans doute assez fréquent dans les sites habités. Toutefois, on ne peut dire dans quelle proportion, faute d'une étude systématique de l'habitat. Quelques observations faites par G.A. Olivier suggèrent que certaines carrières sont néanmoins abandonnées et devenues des nécropoles :

« En allant vers le rivage de la mer, au nord du port, on rencontre des catacombes creusées dans une roche calcaire assez dure. Nous étant approchés de la mer, nous remarquâmes une grande quantité de carrés longs et étroits, qui furent, selon les apparences, autant de sépultures particulières. Nous en vîmes quelques autres trois fois aussi larges, qui s'avançaient sous le rocher, destinés probablement à recevoir le corps de plusieurs personnes ; et sur le rivage même, dans des endroits entièrement submergés lorsque la mer est orageuse, nous observâmes, sur une assez grande étendue, des encaissements [sic] carrés ou des espèces de chambres taillées dans le rocher, que l'on supposerait avoir été des habitations »²⁹.

À Mqaté on observe aussi la réaffectation des carrières à d'autres usages. Les creux d'extraction sont occupés soit par les fondations de certaines maisons, soit par de petits jardins domestiques qui mettent sans doute à profit la facilité de collecte des eaux et le maintien d'une certaine humidité près des parois (photo 6).

²⁹ Guillaume Antoine Olivier, *Voyage dans l'empire ottoman*, p. 132-133.

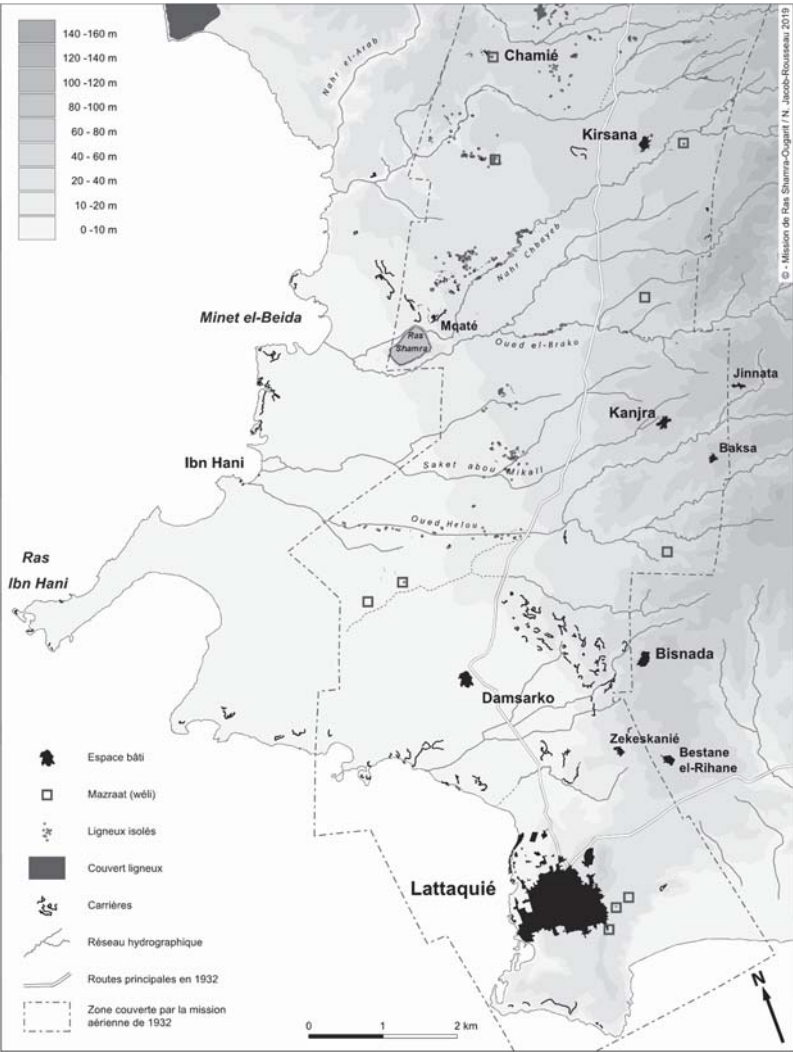


Figure 2. Végétation spontanée et carrières dans le sahel de Lattaquié dans les années 1930 (© Mission de Ras Shamra, réalisation et infographie N. Jacob-Rousseau).



Photo 4. La plaine littorale entre Minet el-Beida et Ras Shamra, le 18 mai 1936. Au premier plan les fouilles de Minet el-Beida ; à l'arrière-plan, les vergers entourant le tell avec les silhouettes des cyprès et des peupliers (© Mission de Ras Shamra, fonds C. Schaeffer, Service des archives du Collège de France. Traitement numérique et infographie G. Devilder).

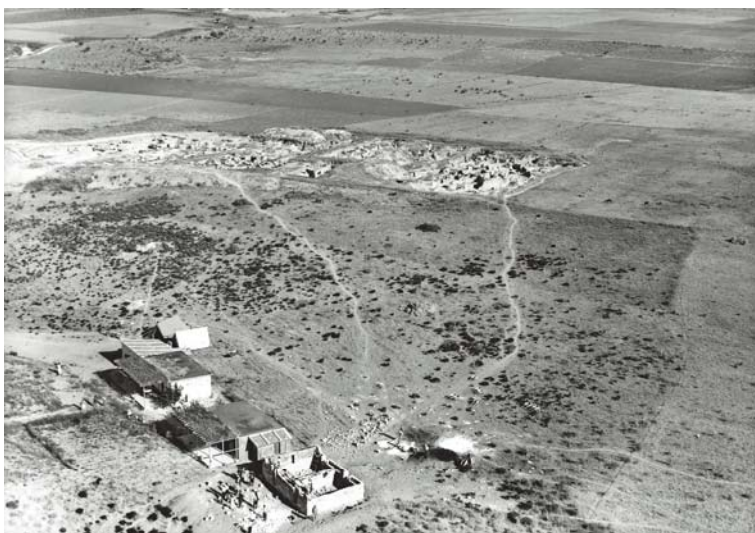


Photo 5. Les maisons de la mission archéologique, au pied de la fouille de Minet el-Beida ; noter le couvert clairsemé de broussailles sur la dune et les parcelles voisines (© Mission de Ras Shamra, fonds C. Schaeffer, Service des archives du Collège de France. Traitement numérique et infographie G. Devilder).

Au delà de ces caractères communs, l'habitat rural présente une certaine diversité comme on peut l'observer à Mqaté où il se partage en deux types (photo 6). Le premier, dans la partie centrale, est constitué d'un groupe de petits bâtiments agglutinés qui paraissent résulter d'ajouts successifs. La longueur de certaines façades n'excède pas quelques mètres. L'autre type est situé à la périphérie et parfois sans mur mitoyen avec le précédent. Il présente des unités plus grandes, constituées de plusieurs bâtisses organisées selon un plan orthogonal et régulier et solidarisées par les murs d'une cour fermée. Ces différences sont peut-être le reflet d'inégalités de richesse mais il reste difficile d'être catégorique car le premier secteur possède un bâtiment à étage aux façades soignées. Elles pourraient aussi signaler une évolution historique du hameau. La position périphérique des bâtiments du second type comme le fait que le plus grand d'entre eux semble empiéter sur une petite carrière incite en effet à les considérer comme plus récents que les premiers. D'autre part leur plan régulier les rapproche des nombreuses fermes disséminées dans la plaine et bien visibles autour de Damsarko (photo 1).

Il est donc fort possible que ces bâtiments soient liés à l'essor des plantations dans les années 1920 et que celui-ci ait induit une évolution du bâti « traditionnel », par des adaptations de taille, de forme, d'organisation. L'économie de plantation a peut-être nécessité une augmentation des surfaces de stockage, de manutention (agrumes, tabac...). En filigrane cela conduirait à admettre que certains sites d'habitat existant dans les années 1930 ont été d'une taille très faible dans le passé, voire qu'ils sont très récents et uniquement liés à l'économie de plantation.



*Photo 6. Vue verticale de Mqaté le 27 mai 1933. Remarquer la petite taille des bâtiments du centre du hameau et les jardins dans les anciennes carrières
(© Mission de Ras Shamra, fonds C. Schaeffer, Service des archives du Collège de France. Traitement numérique et infographie G. Devilder).*

3. Aménagements ruraux : de la mise en culture à la récolte

Les documents à notre disposition pour les années 1930 montrent donc une campagne encore largement ouverte, où l'arbre n'en est qu'aux débuts d'un déploiement qui aboutira, à la fin du XX^e siècle à la constitution d'une huerta quasi continue sur les basses terres³⁰. Mais, alors, ce sont encore les cultures d'annuelles qui dominent sur des terres aisément cultivables, aux sols meubles, développés sur les formations quaternaires. Ces surfaces cultivées forment une mosaïque de vastes parcelles quadrangulaires aux cultures variées, alternant des céréales, majoritaires, et des légumineuses. Le labour était pratiqué à l'araire, tiré par des animaux et ce d'autant plus

³⁰ Jacob-Rousseau et Geyer, « La campagne aux alentours de Ras Shamra », p. 209 et p. 211, fig. 7.

facilement que les terres étaient peu caillouteuses et se laissaient travailler facilement. Seuls les espaces correspondant à des sites archéologiques semblent échapper à cette règle, la plupart des bâtiments antiques ayant été construits en blocs de calcarénite (*ramleh*). Le tell de Ras Shamra, qui abrite l'antique Ougarit, est ainsi aisément repérable sur les photographies aériennes grâce aux nombreux bourrelets de pierres aux formes étirées que l'on y observe. Ces derniers résultent de l'épierrement rendu nécessaire tant du fait des labours qui font remonter les blocs à la surface que des fouilles clandestines effectuées par des pillards, notamment à l'époque ottomane, et dont C. Schaeffer a retrouvé les traces lors des fouilles³¹. Il y a probablement dans cet héritage du passé un indice fort utile pour repérer, sur les photographies anciennes, les sites archéologiques qui ponctuent la plaine littorale. De nos jours, le couvert arboré est tel que ces détails des états de surface ne sont plus perceptibles.

L'importance des cultures d'annuelles, et plus particulièrement des céréales, apparaît également, bien qu'indirectement, sur nombre des clichés des années 1930 du fait de la présence de pastilles blanchâtres qui marquent l'emplacement d'aires de battage circulaires (figure 1, photo 1). « Pour battre le grain, une planche dans laquelle sont enchâssés des silex et qui, portant un paysan et traînée par un ou deux ânes, passe sur le blé et le réduit en un tas de paille hachée dont la graine est retirée par vannage »³². Cette « paille hachée » est elle aussi perceptible sur les clichés datés des mois de juin 1935 et 1937, soit après la récolte, sous forme de bottes et de meules de paille.

Quant aux pressoirs à olive, qui demeurent invisibles sur les clichés, ils sont très certainement présents dans ou à proximité de certains villages et hameaux, parce que le développement des oliveraies est déjà amorcé. J. Weulersse décrit ainsi, à la fin des années 1930, les pressoirs en usage dans les villages : « une grande cuve de

³¹ Voir notamment Claude Schaeffer, « Les fouilles de Minet el-Beida et de Ras-Shamra. Deuxième campagne (printemps 1930). Rapport sommaire », *Syria* 12, 1931, p. 10.

³² Anonyme, « Un peuple qui ressuscite : l'État des Alaouites », *Le Monde Colonial Illustré* 70, 1929, p. 147-150.

pierre massive, percée en son centre d'un axe de bois, autour duquel tourne une lourde meule de pierre ; comme moyen de traction, un cheval ou un âne... »³³. Peut-être sont-ils aussi à chercher directement dans les oliveraies, les arbres nous en masquant la vue. Certaines oliveraies et les jardins, situés à proximité des lieux d'habitats mais aussi là où l'eau se révélait disponible comme le long des oueds, sont seuls à bénéficier d'une irrigation, pratique agricole alors encore fort peu développée.

Cette irrigation se révèle multiforme puisqu'elle est pratiquée à partir des eaux courantes, par des prises dans les oueds, à partir des sources et, de plus en plus à compter des années 1930, à partir de puits, par extraction dans la nappe libre. Certes les sources sont nombreuses mais leur faible débit ne permet guère d'irriguer de vastes surfaces, sauf à les capter et à en retenir les eaux avant de la distribuer dans les plantations. Sur les cours d'eau aux écoulements saisonniers, la nécessité de retenir l'eau a amené à des aménagements relativement complexes pouvant associer un barrage, un terre-plein supportant une machine élévatoire qui déverse l'eau dans un aqueduc en direction d'un bassin-réservoir duquel partent des rigoles de distribution. Un exemple très caractéristique est visible au nord du tell, implanté sur le Nahr Chbayyeb³⁴ en aval du hameau de Mqaté. Enfin, la présence d'une nappe phréatique à faible profondeur (quelques mètres) permet une ressource supplémentaire exploitable par les puits, peu profonds eux aussi, associés à des machines élévatoires alimentant un bassin, même si ce dernier mode d'acquisition de l'eau ne semble pas avoir été le plus fréquemment utilisé dans les campagnes³⁵. Un aménagement de ce type, bien visible près de Mqaté, est d'autant plus intéressant qu'il est absent d'un cliché daté de 1933 et apparaît sur un autre, deux ans après (photo 7). Toujours près du tell, nous avons également relevé l'apparition d'autres de ces puits entre 1930 et 1937³⁶. Ce petit hameau utilisant les diverses ressources en eau disponibles pour

³³ Weulersse, *Le pays des Alaouites*, p. 230.

³⁴ Jacob-Rousseau et Geyer, « Des paysages du nord du Levant », p. 359 et p. 361, fig. 8.

³⁵ Il était plus fréquemment utilisé pour irriguer les jardins des villes comme à Lattaquié, Jablé ou Tartous (Weulersse, *Le pays des Alaouites*, p. 212).

³⁶ Jacob-Rousseau et Geyer, « Des paysages du nord du Levant », p. 357, fig. 5.

l'irrigation se révèle donc être un bel exemple du dynamisme agricole de la région dans les années 1930.



Photo 7. Vue verticale de Mqaté le 6 juin 1935, comparer avec la photo 6, noter quelques menues améliorations du bâti et des jardins et l'apparition d'un puits (© Mission de Ras Shamra, fonds C. Schaeffer, Service des archives du Collège de France. Traitement numérique et infographie N. Jacob-Rousseau).

Jusqu'à la construction de barrages réservoirs et de réseaux de desserte des vergers, à partir des années 1960, l'exploitation des eaux du Sahel relève majoritairement de ce qu'il est convenu d'appeler la petite hydraulique. Celle-ci se fait donc dans le cadre de la propriété privée. Toutefois, à leur débouché dans la plaine, les petits oueds présentent des formes qui signalent peut-être l'existence de quelques aménagements concertés. À l'état spontané, leur tracé développe de nombreuses petites sinuosités qui sont les formes caractéristiques de dissipation de l'énergie des lits à faible pente incisés dans un matériel fin mais cohésif, comme les limons (photos 4 et 6). Or plusieurs tronçons, sur des longueurs variant de quelques dizaines de mètres à quelques kilomètres, sont rectilignes

et leur tracé se conforme alors à l'orientation du parcellaire (figure 3). En outre, dans plusieurs cas, on remarque que ces portions de chenaux recoupent ou simplifient un ancien tracé sinueux ou divagant. Sur d'autres segments, plus petits, des anses d'érosion, qui paraissent récentes sur les clichés aériens, suggèrent une reprise de la mobilité latérale au détriment d'un tracé antérieurement rectifié. On ne distingue pas de digue ou de levées dans ces secteurs, ce qui conduit à faire l'hypothèse que ces alignements ont été réalisés avec des moyens limités, peut-être par de simples creusements imprimant leur nouvelle direction aux chenaux naturels. Dans deux secteurs, au nord de Kirsana et à proximité de la Saket abou Mikhaïl, on remarque en revanche des linéaments situés dans la plaine, à distance du lit des oueds. Ils évoquent des levées de terre et pourraient être des aménagements destinés à contenir les eaux de débordement ou leur imposer une direction d'écoulement déterminée, à la façon des *tabia* tunisiennes. À l'échelle du Sahel, la Saket abou Mikhaïl, l'oued Helou ainsi que les petits drains qui descendent des hauteurs de Bisnada vers le littoral présentent les tracés les moins sinueux et semblent avoir concentré la majeure partie des efforts d'aménagement (figure 3). Or c'est précisément dans cette partie de la plaine que l'essentiel des vergers s'étend dans les années 1930. Dans une précédente publication³⁷, nous avons fait l'hypothèse qu'il pouvait y avoir un lien de causalité entre la mise en valeur arboricole des environs de Damsarko et l'aménagement de l'oued Helou, rectifié de façon continue sur presque deux kilomètres. L'aménagement désactive en effet un ancien lit qui se dirigeait vers l'ouest et qui reste bien visible sur les photographies. Cette configuration suggère qu'il y a eu une volonté de repousser les oueds de la zone des plantations, car leurs lits mobiles pouvaient y faire des incursions infiniment plus dommageables que sur des terres céréalières. Un autre élément pourrait appuyer cette hypothèse. On observe en effet que deux *mazarat*, Cheikh Khalil Najla et Cheikh Daher se situent à proximité de l'ancien tracé de l'oued Helou. Ce sont en outre les seuls sanctuaires que la carte topographique de 1928 signale dans la plaine. Dans les campagnes

³⁷ Jacob-Rousseau et Geyer, « La campagne aux alentours de Ras Shamra », p. 215, fig. 10.

syriennes, ces *mazarat* sont parfois les lieux de cultes qui auraient une origine pré-islamique et liés à des éléments naturels³⁸. Sans que l'on puisse établir de relation certaine entre ces lieux saints et l'ancien oued, ils sont un argument possible pour une certaine ancienneté de ce tracé.

Conclusion

Les photographies de la première moitié du XX^e siècle apportent une intéressante contribution à la connaissance de l'organisation de l'espace dans le passé. Elles permettent de se livrer à l'analyse d'états anciens du paysage, des structures agraires, mais elles ne bornent pas le regard au moment de leur prise de vue. Comme dans l'analyse paysagère actuelle, maints indices se prêtent à la restitution des dynamiques ou des transformations qui avaient cours jadis. Leur interprétation permet donc de mieux saisir les interactions socio-environnementales d'alors.

Ainsi, dans le sahel de Lattaquié, un paysage qui paraît « traditionnel » voire archaïque dans les années 1920-1930 — et qui a souvent été considéré comme tel — montre en fait de nombreux signes de mobilité et d'évolution, même s'ils sont discrets.

Dans cette plaine céréalière alors aux débuts de sa conquête par les vergers, l'analyse de l'habitat comme du bâti soulève indirectement la question du peuplement de cet espace avant l'essor des cultures commerciales. La rareté des sites, la probabilité non négligeable que nombre d'entre eux soient en fait récents invite à envisager l'hypothèse que d'autres formes de mise en valeur ont pu avoir cours dans un passé plus reculé, peut-être le pastoralisme associé à un habitat saisonnier comme dans d'autres plaines littorales méditerranéennes.

Cette question se prolonge si on envisage les photographies comme un outil de prospection et de détection de sites anciens aujourd'hui masqués, si ce n'est détruits, par les nouvelles cultures et les aménagements qu'elles ont parfois nécessité.

³⁸ Jean Gaulmier, « Pèlerinages populaires à Hama », *Bulletin d'études orientales* 1, 1931, p. 137-152.

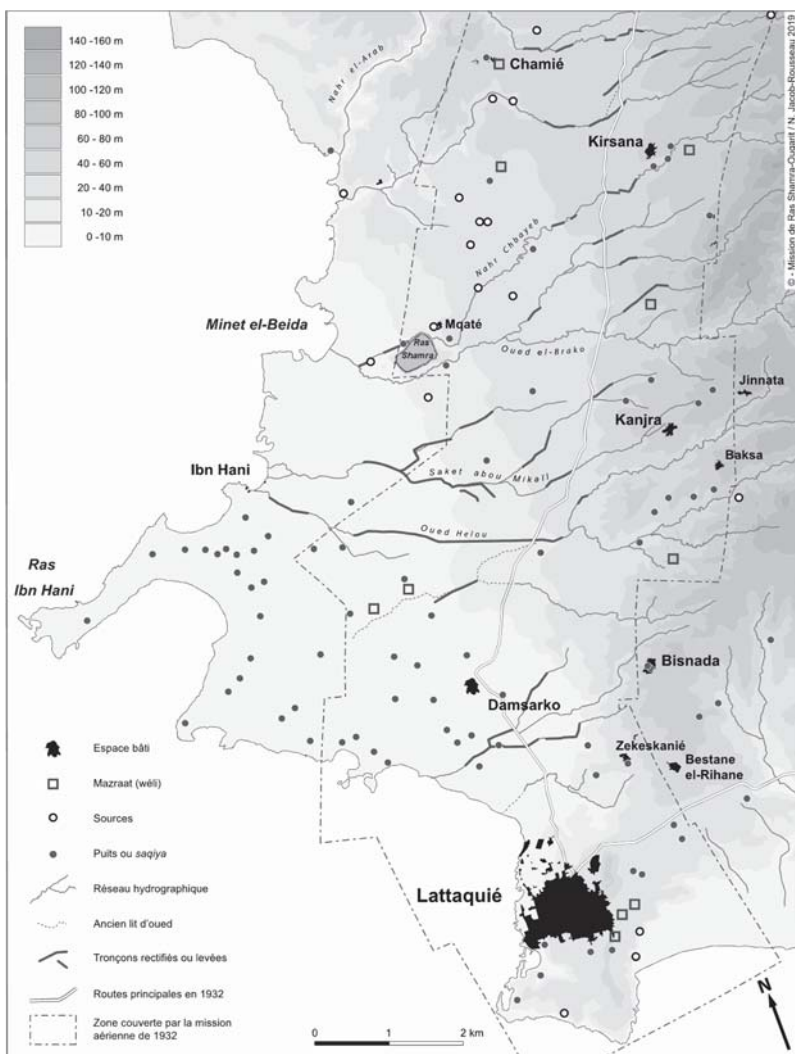


Figure 3. Exploitation des ressources hydriques et aménagements du réseau hydrographique dans le sahel de Lattaquié dans les années 1930 (© Mission de Ras Shamra, réalisation et infographie N. Jacob-Rousseau).

Shaping the Collective Memory at (Collective?) Grave Sites: The Representation of Death as a Tool for Creating Shared Memories in the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age Northern Levant

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Abstract. It has often been shown that deceased individuals could become part of the collective or cultural memory, not only but also in the Ancient Near East. These memories were oftentimes already formed during a person's life time and potentially staged and altered during (potentially elaborate) burial ceremonies as well as in mortuary rituals afterwards. However, as the archaeological record of the Late Bronze and Iron Age Northern Levant suggests, burial practices and ritual treatments of the dead differed considerably throughout the periods. Neither collective graves nor the collective identity of the dead actually played a role in the collective or cultural memory, as these forms of commemoration were restricted to persons or actions that actually existed at some point and could therefore be remembered by the living. A collective of the dead, like the one described for the burial record of the Royal Tomb at Qatna, could therefore, by definition, not have played a role in the formation of the collective or cultural memory.

Résumé. On a souvent montré que les défunts pouvaient faire partie de la mémoire collective ou culturelle, y compris au Proche-Orient ancien. Ces souvenirs se formaient déjà du vivant de la personne et étaient mis en scène lors de rites funéraires. Cependant, comme le suggèrent les trouvailles archéologiques du Levant septentrional au Bronze récent et à l'âge de Fer, les pratiques funéraires variaient considérablement à ces époques. Ni les tombes collectives ni l'identité collective des morts ne jouaient un rôle dans la mémoire collective ou culturelle, dans la mesure où ces formes de commémoration se restreignaient aux personnes et actions qui avaient existé pouvaient être évoquées par les vivants. Un collectif de morts, tel que celui décrit à Qatna, ne peut donc, par définition, avoir joué un rôle dans la formation de la mémoire collective ou culturelle.

When addressing the topic of “Collective Memory as Capital” it stands to reason to also include the collective memory of the dead into the discussion.¹ Already Jan Assmann’s often cited publication “Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen” (2018) discusses as one of the prominent examples the commemoration of the dead within the collective memory:

“Der Unterschied zwischen dem natürlichen oder auch technisch ausgebildeten bzw. implementierten Sich-Erinnern des Einzelnen, der von seinem Alter her einen Rückblick auf sein Leben wirft, und dem Andenken, das sich nach seinem Tode von seiten der Nachwelt an dieses Leben knüpft, macht das spezifisch *kulturelle* Element der kollektiven Erinnerung deutlich. Wir sagen, daß der Tote in der Erinnerung der Nachwelt ‘weiterlebt’, so als handele es sich um eine fast natürliche Fortexistenz aus eigener Kraft. In Wirklichkeit handelt es sich aber um einen Akt der Belebung, den der Tote dem entschlossenen Willen der Gruppe verdankt, ihn nicht dem Verschwinden preiszugeben, sondern kraft der Erinnerung als Mitglied der Gemeinschaft festzuhalten und in die fortschreitende Gegenwart mitzunehmen.” (Assmann 2018, 33)

Easy enough, one can find numerous examples of famous historical personages, whom were commemorated over a long period of time, often with political motivations, so that this act of commemoration served as *symbolic capital* (cf. Koch’s introduction to this publication) for those referring to the respective person. This contribution will give some examples of how deceased individuals were commemorated in the Late Bronze Age (LBA) and Iron Age (IA) Northern Levant (and neighboring regions), how the living already tried to affect how they were commemorated later on and how these aspects changed over the periods examined. However the first part of the present contribution is only supposed to lay the groundwork for the discussion in the second part, which debates whether collective burials played a role with regard to the

¹ I am grateful to Ido Koch and Thomas Römer for inviting me to participate in the respective workshop, of which the results are published in the present volume.

collective memory and if so, what role that would have been. It should be mentioned that in terms of collective burials only those are relevant for the present contribution, that contained disarticulated skeletal remains that were *re*-buried and comingled with other deceased's bones. Collective burials that merely contained several primary burials are not relevant for the following discussion. In order to discuss the question of how these collective burials are related to the collective memory it is also important to address the issue of the change of status that a deceased might have undergone when being integrated into a collective burial.

Dead individuals in the collective memory

One of the best examples of the representation of dead individuals in the collective memory in the Ancient Near East is, in the author's opinion, found in the ritual text "Mari 12803" from Mari on the Euphrates. Therefore, to give an example of how dead personages could be included in the collective memory, a little excursion to regions outside the Levant proper is necessary.

Mari 12803,² column I (select lines)

(14)	<i>a-di a-na ^dUTU la ú-te-em-me-du</i>	As long as nothing is presented to Šamaš,
(15)	<i>ki-is-pu-um ú-ul ik-ka-sà-aq</i>	a <i>kispum</i> will not be offered.
(16)	<i>iš-tu a-na ^dUTU ú-te-me-du</i>	After something is presented to Šamaš,
(17)	<i>ki-is-pu-um</i>	the <i>kispum</i>
(18)	<i>a-na LUGAL-ki-in</i>	for Sargon,
(19)	<i>[x] na-ra-am-30</i>	Narām-Sîn,
(20)	<i>^lḥa-na.MEŠ ja-ra-di</i>	the <i>jaradum</i> -Ḫaneans,
(21)	<i>ù a-na šu-ut nu-um-ḥe-e</i>	and for "those from Numḥa"
(22)	<i>ù DIL.ḪI.A</i>	and others,
(23)	<i>ki-is-pu-um an-nu-ú-[um]</i>	th[is] <i>kispum</i>

² The text was first presented by Maurice Birot at the 26th *Rencontre* (Birot 1980, 139–150). This transliteration follows Durand and Guichard 1997, 67. For a complete edition of the text see also S. Lange 2014a, 184–201.

(24) *ik-ka-sà-[ap]* will be offer[ed].

The text “Mari 12803” dates to the time when Yasmah-Adad (ca. 1803–1775 BCE), son of the Assyrian king Shamshi-Adad (1830–1775 BCE), ruled Mari (Birot 1980, 148, Durand and Guichard 1997, 28).³ This text testifies that the family ritual *kispum*, for which Akio Tsukimoto established the term “care for the dead” (Tsukimoto 1985, 22), was conducted for the Akkadian kings Sargon (ca. 2340–2285 BCE) and Narām-Sîn (ca. 2250 BCE). Even though the dynasty of Yasmah-Adad originated, according to the current state of research, from the land of Akkad (Durand and Guichard 1997, 28, Jacquet 2002, 60f., Charpin 2004a, 148–150, 2004b, 372–376), family ties to the famous Akkadian rulers who lived almost 500 years before, can be excluded with confidence. Thus, a ritual designed for the family’s ancestors was performed for two very famous kings, to which a genealogical relationship is very unlikely. It seems highly reasonable, though, that Yasmah-Adad intended to *construct* a familial relationship to the Akkadian kings. By arranging himself in the lineage of the “famous” Akkadian kings and connecting them to himself with a family ritual, he *made* the Akkadian kings his ancestors to legitimize his claim to power.

This text has already been discussed in detail with regard to its meaning for the collective memory elsewhere (S. Lange 2015), so that its relevance for the present topic shall only be presented here briefly. The text indicates that the performance of the ritual was not conducted in private by the king of Mari, but was rather performed in public in combination with other rituals and very likely with a large audience. That the reference to Sargon and Narām-Sîn was at least understood by the elites can be presupposed due to the “fame” of these rulers that was maintained until and revived during the Old Babylonian period (1792–1595 BCE). This is known from copies of Akkadian inscriptions that were made by Old Babylonian scribes in Nippur and Ur, partly copied off from stelae and statues

³ Tsukimoto as well as Dietrich and Loretz assume that Yasmah-Adad’s father, Shamshi-Adad, performed the ritual (Tsukimoto 1985, 73–78, Dietrich and Loretz 1986/87/88/89/91, 325).

(Edzard 2009, 78).⁴ According to Piotr Michalowski, who wrote with regard to Shamshi-Adad's royal inscriptions in which the king relates himself to the Akkadian empire, "The examples [...] represent the most vivid local usage of Akkad memories for local ideological purposes. [...] Considering the number, and the sheer length of Sargonic inscriptions that were available to Old Babylonian scribes and antiquarians in Nippur, Ur, Mari, and elsewhere, one can safely guess that Sumer and Akkad, as well as areas to the north, east, and west were inundated with public monuments, both with and without writing. Contemporary royal propaganda extolled the might of charismatic kingship in innovative ways, and we only have access to a small part of this enormous industry." (Michalowski 1993, 87) Thus, it is almost certain that Sargon and Narām-Sîn were part of the collective memory during the time of Shamshi-Adad.

However, the names of Sargon and Narām-Sîn very likely also generated some controversial associations: Yasmah-Adad ruled at the beginning of the 18th c. BCE in Mari. In the 23rd c. BCE the city was conquered by Sargon and around 2250 BCE destroyed by Narām-Sîn (cf. Margueron 2004, 126, 310-312, Kupper 1987-1990, 384, Cluzan and Lecompte 2011, 20-22, 2011-2012). After the city was quickly rebuilt, the so-called *šakkanaku* ruled in Mari, though under the hegemony of the Akkadian kings. Thus, even though the time of the hegemony of the Akkadian empire had ended over three hundred years before, the reference of Yasmah-Adad to the rulers who had once destroyed the city must at least to some extent have been controversial. Also, considering that Yasmah-Adad could be construed as a usurper of the throne of Mari, empowered by his father who had conquered the city, the reference to the dominant and hegemonic Akkadian kings in this *kispum*-ritual is very portentous. It did not only place Yasmah-Adad in the lineage of these indisputably "famous" kings, it was, especially in Mari, a symbol of his acquired power over the city.

Since the graves of these two famous kings have not been found, it is unknown to us how majestic the picture was that was created

⁴ For the reception of the Akkadian kings in Old Babylonian and Old Assyrian documents see Liverani 1993.

of these two kings after their death, but it can be assumed that it reflected the self-portrayal they pursued during life time.

In sum, with the two rulers of Akkad being *commemorated* in a family ritual we have a compelling example of historical personages, who made sure to create their own narrative already during lifetime, who most likely received burials that would have left an impression in the peoples' memory, who had stelae and statues of themselves set up, which most likely lasted until long after their death and who then were commemorated away from the center of their homeland with a family ritual performed in public. In order to achieve the desired effect, the performers of the ritual had to rely on the *collective*, or in this case *cultural* memory.⁵ This brings Astrid Erll's statement to mind that "Cultural memory is not the Other of history. Nor is it the opposite of individual remembering. Rather, it is the totality of the context within which such varied cultural phenomena originate." (Erll 2011, 7) In sum, Yasmah-Adad (and/or Shamshi-Adad) heavily relied on the *symbolic capital* that these two deceased historical personages comprised and used it for their own interests.

Creating an image upon death

With this example of individual dead being part of the collective memory in mind, two examples from the LBA Northern Levant, Ugarit and Qatna, will be used to investigate which sources can provide information on the dead in the collective memory. Also of great importance is the role burial arrangements and grave sites played in creating these memories. It goes without saying that most of the sources that provide information on the topic discussed inform us about royals and other elites. While both sites provide evidence for individual as well as collective burials, this article will first concentrate on the individual burials to illuminate how certain images were created upon death to remain in the collective memory. The collective burials will be addressed in the last part of this discussion.

⁵ For a definition of the terms *cultural* and *communicative* memory see particularly Assmann 2018, 50-56.

At Qatna, the Royal Tomb is of particular interest, since its inventory was sealed by the backfilling of the antechamber that was caused by the destruction of the palace. This destruction, which suddenly ended the use of the tomb and thus froze its inventory in its last state, took place during the reign of Šuppiluliuma I around 1340 BCE (Pfälzner 2011b, 58-59, 65). The undisturbed state in which the tomb's inventory was found, as well as the thorough excavations of the tomb and the interdisciplinary studies that have been conducted on the material allow for a detailed reconstruction of the activities that were performed outside and within the tomb (Pfälzner 2011a, Pfälzner 2012).

The complex of the Royal Tomb, which lies under the northeastern part of the palace, is composed of the corridor that connects the official wing of the palace with the antechamber and the rock-cut four-chambered tomb itself. The entrance to the tomb, flanked by two identical ancestor statues that were set up in the antechamber (see below), led to the main chamber from which side chambers to the east, south and west were cut into the rock (Fig. 1; for a detailed description of the architectural complex see Pfälzner 2011c).



Fig. 1. Map of the Royal Tomb with its main installations
(© Qatna project, IANES, University of Tübingen).

The evidence from a female, primary burial on the so-called burial table in the western side chamber (see below) shows that the corpse was prepared with a specific paste, made of earth pigments and probably aromatic oils. Subsequently this deceased individual was possibly heated at temperatures of about 250–300°C. Also for some other bone findings it is suggested that they were exposed to heat, though in the latter cases traces of the mentioned paste were not detected (Reifarth and Drewello 2011, 474, Reifarth 2011, 518 f., Witzel and Kreutz 2007, 177–179, Witzel 2011, 369–370, Fig. 2, Witzel et al. in prep.). Since there are no clear indications for a fire or ember inside the Royal Tomb, this preparation was presumably performed at a different location, probably somewhere within or close to the royal palace (Pfälzner 2012, 210).⁶ Thus, the evidence from *within* the Royal Tomb seems to suggest that certain ritual actions were already performed *outside* of the tomb with regard to the corpse. One could imagine that the reason for heating the deceased members of the royal family was to dry out the corpse to decelerate the decomposition process, so that a certain image of the deceased could be maintained for as long as possible.⁷ Possibly the corpse was displayed for a while within the palace and maybe even presented during a procession. That a certain image of the deceased was created is suggested by said female burial (Fig. 2). The traces on top of the “burial table” show that the corpse was placed in a wooden coffin, bedded on several layers of textile, partly decorated with interwoven patterns dyed with murex purple (Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner 2011, Reifarth 2011). Before the corpse was bedded on this precious cushion, the deceased was, as it is described above, exposed to heat. When the treatment with

⁶ Very few traces of charcoal that were detected in some soil samples (Pümpin in prep., Reifarth et al. in prep. b), are not sufficient to serve as evidence for a fire or ember in the tomb. Nevertheless, to exclude that the corpses were heated *within* the tomb is not entirely possible, since not all the soil in the tomb was sampled for microarchaeological analysis.

⁷ How such a heating procedure and the results might have looked like is also discussed in Reifarth et al. in prep. a.

heat was completed, the corpse was adorned with a colorful girdle⁸ made of three strings of gold and 135 beads, seals and pendants of precious materials (Roßberger 2015, 168-183, Plate 26.9-28c). It seems very likely that the deceased individual was already adorned with these items when she was presumably laid out in the palace. Eventually the corpse was transferred to the tomb, where it finally received its primary burial on the stone table in the western side chamber.⁹



Fig. 2. The so-called burial table with its location in the western side chamber with a girdle made of three strings of gold and 135 items of precious materials hanging over the front edge of the stone table and a mineralized textile fragment with interwoven blue patterns dyed with murex purple (Photo: Konrad Wita, Photo girdle: Edilberto Formigli, Photo textile: Nicole Reifarth © Qatna project, IANES, University of Tübingen).

⁸ The author would like to thank Nicole Reifarth, who determined on the basis of the photos of the girdle that the amber beads were not exposed to the same heat as the corpse presumably was (E-Mail correspondence, 20.2.2019).

⁹ For a discussion whether the corpse was laid out in the southern chamber between its laying out in the palace and receiving its burial on the stone table, see S. Lange 2014c, 251 f. The newest results of the mikroarchaeological analysis, however, challenge this interpretation (Reifarth et al. in prep. b).

Other locations of primary burials were identified by Elisa Roßberger and Matthew James in the main chamber of the tomb (Roßberger 2015, 46-52, 54-59, James and Evershed in prep., Reifarth et al. in prep. b). Here four larger, dark, organic stains indicate that these were areas, where the dead were placed (Fig. 3), adorned with jewelry and accompanied with remarkable finds, like an amber lion-headed pyxis, a gold hand or gold fittings for a horn-shaped bottle (Pfälzner 2011d, 146-152, 158-161, Roßberger 2015, 50, 55).

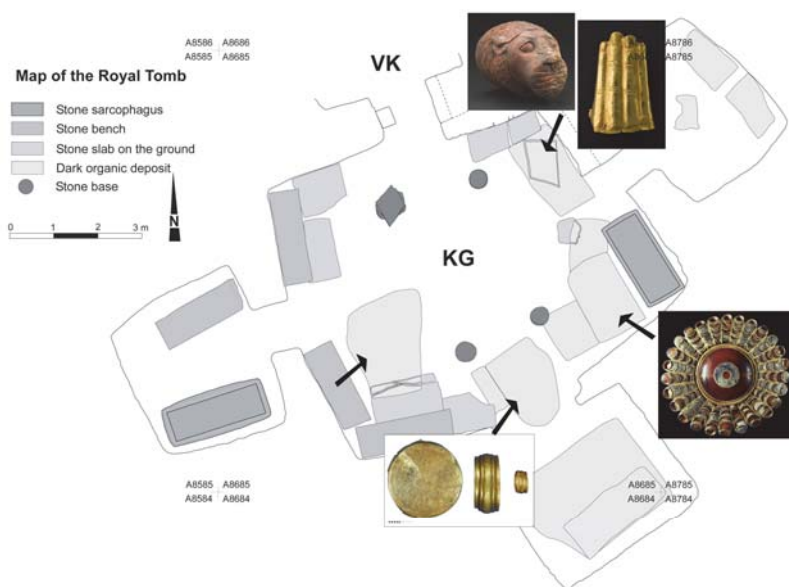


Fig. 3. The four dark areas with organic deposits in the main chamber (indicated by arrows) and a selection of precious objects found in those areas (Illustration by the author; photos: Peter Frankenstein, Hendrik Zwietasch [Landesmuseum Württemberg, Stuttgart] and Konrad Wita © Qatna project, IANES, University of Tübingen).

As Elisa Roßberger has previously pointed out, one of the striking features of the Royal Tomb is that it is not possible to certainly identify one or more buried kings within the tomb. Personal cylinder seals or other identifying markers are missing and no other inscriptions indicate a personalization of the deceased. She notices that the dark stained areas on the floor of the main chamber were

equipped with comparable sets of jewelry and some fragments of purple-dyed textiles, whereas the other human remains in the tomb were secondarily buried in one of the sarcophagi or in the side chambers without personal adornment (Roßberger 2014, 210 f.).¹⁰ Roßberger comes to the conclusion “that jewellery items were means to keep the dead for a certain time-span visually ‘beautiful’ and ‘alive’ and that their removal visually marked the transition from a first to a second form of *post mortem* identity.” (Roßberger 2014, 211) While other forms of post mortem identity will be addressed later in this publication, it should be emphasized for now how an image of the dead was created upon their display and burial, which was very likely supposed to leave a long-lasting impression amongst the attendees of the ceremonies and thus become part of the *communicative memory*.

At Qatna we can retrace quite clearly secondary burial stages, which seem to have served the purpose of altering the deceased’s form of existence (S. Lange 2014c, 248-250, 2014b, 94-95).¹¹ These secondary burials can be traced within two sarcophagi, one in the southeastern corner of the main chamber; the other next to the “burial table” on the southern side of the western chamber (Fig. 4). In both sarcophagi, the bones of several individuals¹² were deposited after some of the soft tissue had dissolved and the bones were mostly disarticulated. Also, archaeozoologist Emmanuelle Vila was able to detect animal bones in articulation in both sarcophagi (Vila 2011, 391, see also fig. 4, 398, 401) so that the presentation of fresh food offerings can safely be assumed. As has been pointed out the dead were apparently deprived of their personal adornments when they received their secondary burial (Roßberger 2014, 211). Then again, while highly decorative stone vessels and other “singular

¹⁰ For the complete distribution of purple-dyed textiles in the Royal Tomb see Reifarth in prep. For the textiles dyed with murex purple see also Reifarth 2011, James, Reifarth, and Evershed 2011, James and Evershed in prep.

¹¹ See also, with partly different conclusions Pfälzner 2012, 211-213.

¹² Main chamber: Infant (7-10 years), juvenile (14-15 years, probably m) and young adult (less than 25 years, probably m) (Witzel and Kreutz 2007, 176-177, Witzel 2011, 370-372); western chamber: matur (> 50 years, m), adult (30-40 years, fm) (Witzel 2011, 372-374).

objects” were linked to the individuals in the primary burial locations and “linked to the memory of the individuals buried there” (Roßberger 2014, 211), such objects were also found inside of the sarcophagi. In the latter context Roßberger considers them “long-term memorization efforts serving the group as a whole in materializing and transmitting its cultural identity, i.e. its *cultural memory*.” (Roßberger 2014, 211) However, one could also argue for a different interpretation and expand this interpretation on the meaning of these items with regard to primary burials. The author has argued elsewhere that the secondary burial in the Royal Tomb of Qatna involved a change of status from simply a “dead individual” to an “individual ancestor,” which was accompanied by rituals which included *inter alia* fresh food offerings for the deceased (S. Lange 2014b, 94-95, 109-111, 2014c, 248-250, 253). Considering this shift in meaning of the deceased but, as has been argued previously, the retaining of their individual status, one can extend Roßberger’s interpretation of these “singular objects” that they are, even in this state, linked to the memory of the deceased individual. The idea that these objects served to materialize and transmit the group’s cultural identity would, in this model, have happened in the next stage, when the deceased received their *tertiary* burial and their bones were mingled with the remains of previously deceased. This question will be addressed again in the second part of this paper.

With regard to Ugarit, the LBA tombs represent most of the people living in the city of Ugarit—and thus, if someone could afford a stone house and a subterranean tomb within the city walls a somewhat elitist status can be presupposed. Mostly due to their early date of excavation the tombs from Ugarit (Salles 1995, 173, Marchegay 2008, 98) do not present us with a record as detailed as in the Royal Tomb of Qatna. However, some of the Ugaritic tombs clearly show that the dead received primary burials in subterranean tombs within the domestic quarter of the city.

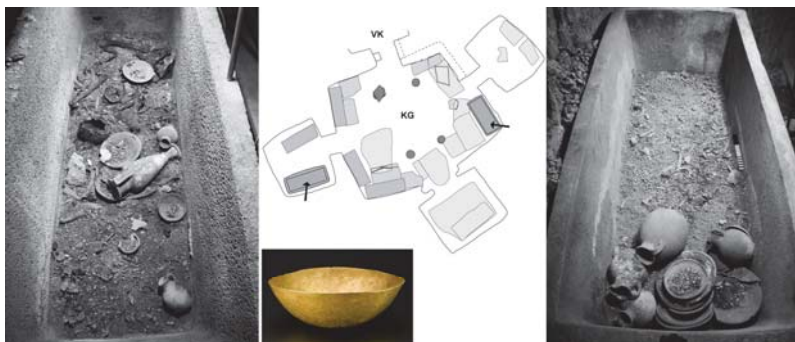


Fig. 4. The two sarcophagi from the main chamber (right) and the western chamber (left), with the golden bowl that was deposited within it (Photos of sarcophagi: Konrad Wita, photo of golden bowl: Peter Frankenstein, Hendrik Zwietasch (Landesmuseum Württemberg, Stuttgart))

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The abundance of objects that are in some instances documented to have accompanied the dead suggest that also at Ugarit a picture of the deceased was staged that was meant to leave an imprint in the bereaved's memories. An interesting aspect about the Ugaritic tombs is how consciously they were integrated into the cityscape (Fig. 5), which was investigated by Sophie Marchegay in her dissertation (Marchegay 1999a, 1999b, 1999c). She points out that not every house possessed a tomb, but that the ratio rather suggests that two or three houses had to share one tomb and she hypothesizes that one tomb could possibly be used by more than one family (Marchegay 1999a, 66 f., 2008, 106 f.). In the majority of the LBA houses at Ugarit the tomb was easily accessible from outside the house, so that numerous tombs could be entered without passing the main entrance of the house and that even those who didn't live in the house could maintain the care for the dead without disturbing the residents (Marchegay 1999a, 52). Over time, from the Middle Bronze Age (MBA) to the LBA, the access shafts to the tombs were replaced by dromoi and thus provided better accessibility to the tomb. The development in sepulchral architecture culminated in the erection of big stone tombs with corbeled vaults during the terminal LBA (1365–1200 BCE) (Marchegay 1999a, 80, 153, 2008, 102 f.). This development might indicate that the intention increased to project status and wealth and to create a certain image during

the funeral that was composed by the elaborate tomb chamber, the very likely adorned deceased and an abundance of grave goods.

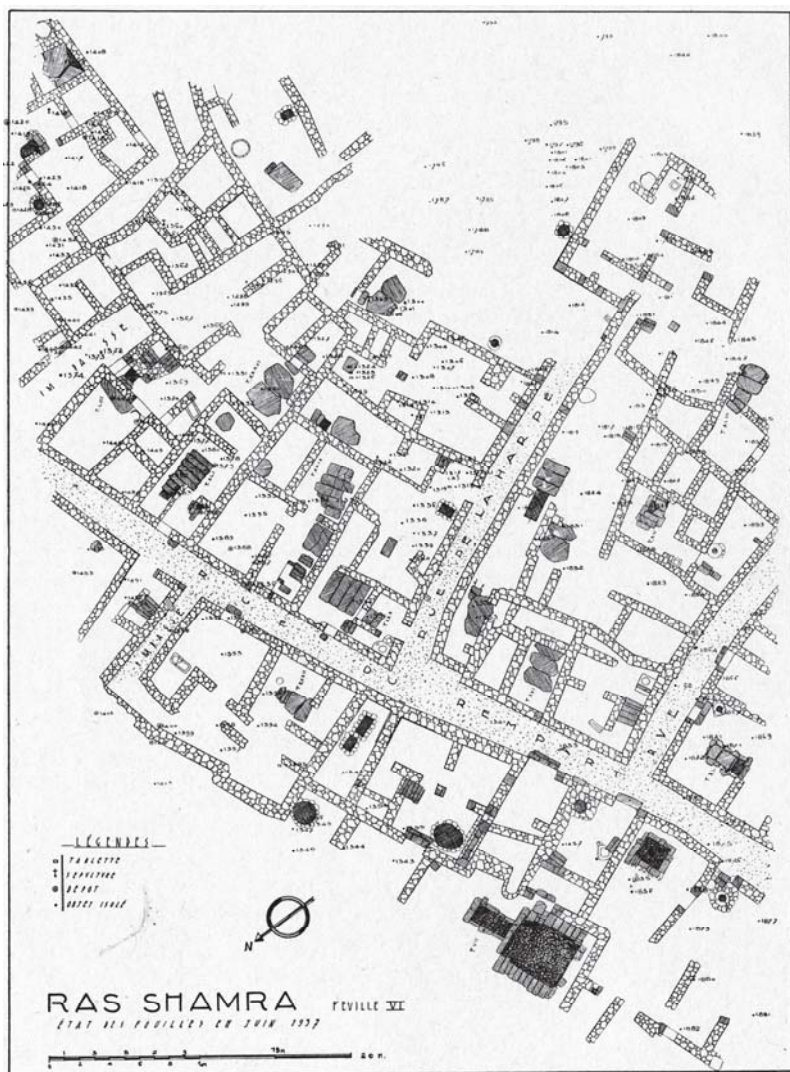


Fig. 5. Map of part of the city of Ugarit with the tombs integrated into the domestic houses (Schaeffer 1938, 198, Fig. 2).

The way the tombs were integrated into the houses shows that the realm of daily life and death were very closely connected. The

tombs or rather the dead were permanently present in the peoples' lives and a constant reminder to perform the care for the dead. Thus, one can conclude with regard to the graves at Ugarit that images were created during the funeral and, through the presence of tombs in daily life, these images were maintained and the dead were cared for.

These two archaeological examples from the LBA demonstrate that no effort or costs were spared in order to create and maintain a certain image of the deceased to—ideally—become part of the collective memory, with regard to kings or other high-ranking members of the society even the cultural memory.

After looking at these two examples from the LBA, the question occurs whether it is possible to trace similar efforts in IA sites of the Northern Levant. Did the living maintain their deceased's individual memories in this period as well? One can probably say at least just as much and maybe even more than in the LBA. For one thing, a manipulation of skeletal material does, other than in the LBA, not seem to have occurred in the IA Northern Levant. Though, again, we will come back to this topic in the next part of this contribution. But, maybe even more importantly, the archaeological and textual sources seem to indicate that the individuals were much more eager to maintain their *individuality* in the *collective* memory. This is supported by a vast amount of very explicit examples. A very prominent, early example is the Ahiiram sarcophagus, which is generally thought to have been made in the 13th century BCE but was re-used by Itthobaal (ca. 1000 BCE) to bury his father (see inter alia Niehr 2006a, 232-233 with further references). The 6-line Phoenician inscription, of which a shorter version was used for the tomb shaft inscription, reads:

“Coffin which Itthobaal son of Ahiiram, king of Byblos, made for Ahiiram, his father, when he placed him in eternity: if a king from among kings or a governor from among governors or the commander of an army should come up against Byblos and uncover this coffin, may the scepter of his rule be broken, may the throne of his kingship be overturned, and may peace flee Byblos, and (as for) him, may his inscription be effaced (from) before Byblos.” (Teixidor 1997, 31)

Similar inscriptions like the famous one from the Ahiiram sarcophagus have been found at many Phoenician grave sites. While Helen Dixon states in her dissertation on IA Phoenician mortuary practices that Phoenician inscriptional sources from the Iron I-II periods that relate to mortuary practices are relatively sparse, those that do exist usually use similar formulae, be it on burial stelae or on other inscribed objects. They contain the name of the inscribed object, the personal name and the social role or kinship ties of the person (Dixon 2013, 158). Closer to the Ahiiram sarcophagus are the Phoenician royal burial inscriptions, originating in Byblos and Sidon, from the Persian-Hellenistic periods. These inscriptions have in common that they show a concern for leaving the dead undisturbed, curse those who would disturb the dead, and explicitly mention how few grave goods were placed in the sarcophagus with the dead king to keep grave robbers away (Dixon 2013, 169-175, 180-186, 194-203). In addition, at Byblos the “bones” as a unit of burial integrity are emphasized (Dixon 2013, 169-175). Even though only few royal inscriptions are preserved, those that do exist indicate how important it was at least to the royal deceased throughout the Phoenician periods to emphasize their individuality. What could be observed on the Ahiiram sarcophagus and can be deduced from the mentioned inscriptions is also strongly emphasized by the media on which the inscriptions were engraved: personalized sarcophagi that were used by the elite in the Persian-Hellenistic period represent the climax of the attempt to maintain one’s individuality. One of the most famous ones is surely the sarcophagus of king Eshmunazor II (beginning of 5th cent. BCE) of Sidon, which was decorated in Egyptian style and engraved with a Phoenician inscription (Dixon 2013, 182-186, with further references).¹³ But also uninscribed, individually carved sarcophagi of Greek inspiration like one from the area of Tripoli, which dates to about 470 BCE, underline, even without any inscription, the attempt to preserve the individual’s image and serve as mnemonic device for the collective memory.

¹³ For an image of the sarcophagus see <https://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/sarcophagus-eshmunazar-ii-king-sidon>.

Further North, in Northern Syria and Southeast Anatolia a new genre of images emerges in the IA: the Syro-Hittite funerary monument. While this genre has been dealt with extensively by others (see particularly Voos 1986, Bonatz 2000, Rehm and Eder 2016, 1-200, M. Lange 2015, M. Lange 2017, 468-491), two famous examples shall be mentioned here: The statues from Tall Halaf and the Kuttamuwa stele from Zincirli. In Tall Halaf, ancient Guzana, several seated statues were found. Two female statues were sitting on top or very close to grave-pits with cremation urns within small mud-brick constructions (Fig. 6 shows one of these statues). It is most likely that these statues represent the deceased who were buried in immediate vicinity and that the mudbrick constructions can be interpreted as private mortuary chapels (von Oppenheim 1950, 159-167, Orthmann 2010, 369-370, Teinz 2012, 22). Therefore, in the case of these two statues, the individually buried deceased, the statues above the graves and the erected chapels represent the desire to be remembered and commemorated as individual.

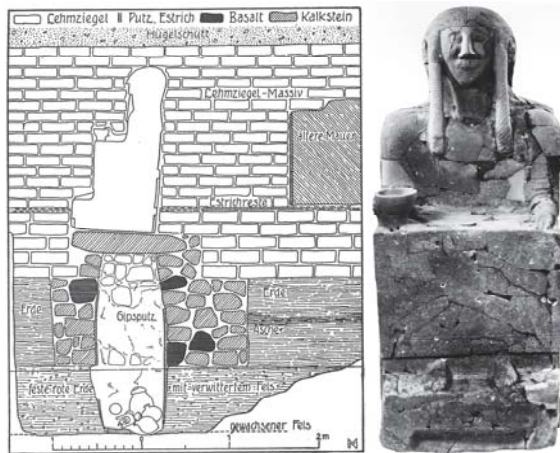


Fig. 6. Section of the southern mortuary chapel with its statue Halaf A 1 (von Oppenheim 1950, Fig. 80) and a photo of the statue (© Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Vorderasiatisches Museum, Photo: Olaf M. Teßmer).

Not associated with mortuary remains but provided with an inscription is the mortuary stele of Kuttamuwa (Fig. 7), discovered in 2008 in the Northern Lower Town of Zincirli (Struble and Rimmer

Herrmann 2009). Virginia Herrmann has argued very convincingly that the stele was set up in a building that was then dedicated in whole or in part to the mortuary cult of Kuttamuwa, and that also the building next door, which can be interpreted as a neighborhood temple, had influenced the choice to establish Kuttamuwa's mortuary cult in this location (Herrmann 2014). The first few lines of the Aramaic or Sam'alian inscription that was engraved next to a man sitting on a chair in front of an offering table, reads: "I am KTMW, servant of Panamuwa, who commissioned for myself (this) stele while still living. I placed it in my eternal chamber(?) (*bsyr/d* 'lmy) and established a feast (at) this chamber(?) (*syr/d*); [...]" (Pardee 2009, 53-54) While the remaining lines, in which the offerings that are supposed to be made to different gods and to the deceased himself are mentioned, are not of direct relevance to the topic, these first lines not only attest to the fact that the living in many occasions most likely took care of the precautions regarding their deaths themselves, Kuttamuwa also refers to his "eternal chamber", implying the expectation that he as an individual was taken care for indefinitely.

These examples show an increased attempt in the IA to remain in the collective memory as individual and to be cared for as such. Though, we have to keep in mind that this was, as it seems, the wishful thinking of those who had the respective sarcophagi, steles and statues manufactured during their lifetime. About how they were actually treated in the ritual cycle, the uncovered evidence remains mostly silent.



Fig. 7. Kuttamuwa stele with Sam'alian inscription (Photo: Eudora Struble, courtesy of the Chicago-Tübingen Expedition to Zincirli).

Status change of the deceased: becoming part of the dead's collective

Which role played collective graves, in which comingled skeletal remains were secondarily buried, with regard to the commemoration of the deceased? To answer this question, it is foremost important to discuss whether the change of burial location and the change from articulated to disarticulated bones also changed the

way the dead were perceived. If and how was the status of the deceased altered when their bones were transferred to an ossuary?

Picking up where we left off with regard to the Royal Tomb of Qaṭna, the re-burial of disarticulated bones into the ossuary is of relevance for the discussion of collective grave sites. In the eastern side chamber of the Royal Tomb, which has been understood as an ossuary, a commingling of bones of six to seven individuals and disarticulated animal bones was found, associated with some ceramic bowls (Fig. 8; Witzel 2011, 378-379, S. Lange 2014c, 252-253). It is noteworthy that the dead did *not* receive fresh food offerings any longer, which can be deduced from the fact that all animal bones that belong to the fleshy part of the animal were disarticulated and only those bones that are considered slaughtering waste were found in articulation (Vila 2011, 394). It seems that the commingling of one individual's bones with the bones of other individuals led to the end of the ritual treatment of the individual and resulted in an integration of the individual into a collective (S. Lange 2014b, 95-100, 109-111, 2014c, 252-253). From that point onwards, the task of providing the dead with food was probably performed in front of the statues in the antechamber of the Royal Tomb (Fig. 9). These identical statues don't possess any inscriptions and are thus not individually assignable. On the contrary, the fact that they are perfectly identical suggests that they represent a non-specific plurality of deceased kings and thus stand for a certain collective. Several ceramic vessels and animal bones found in front of these statues show that food offerings were made to the statues until the last phase of the utilization of the tomb (S. Lange 2014c, 245, see also Novák and Pfälzner 2003, 145-146, 161-162, Pfälzner 2003, 93-94, 2011d, 74-76, Paoletti, Ahrens, and Schmid 2019, 290-292). "Singular objects" like those discussed above were not found in the ossuary, supporting the suggestion that they were associated with dead individuals to maintain their individuality and only afterwards, assembled in a central area in the tomb, represent the cultural identity of the group.



Fig. 8. The eastern chamber of the Royal Tomb, which was identified as ossuary
(Photo: Konrad Wita, © Qatna project, IANES, University of Tübingen).

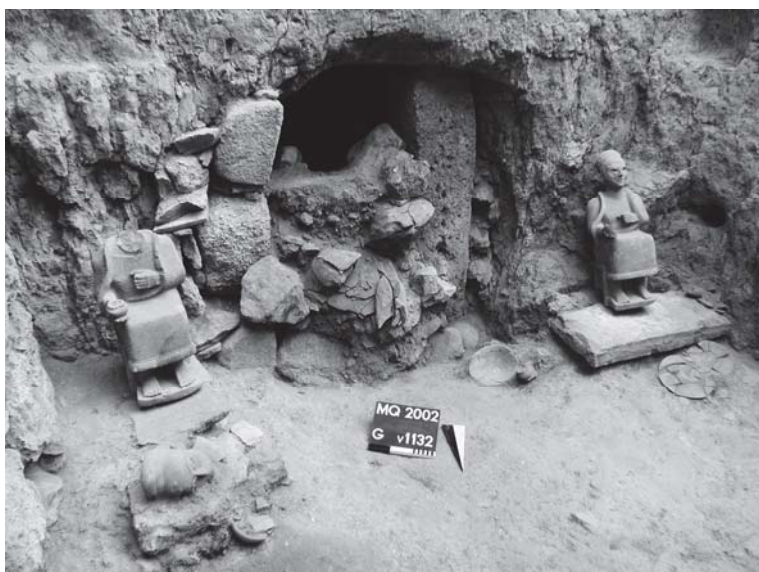


Fig. 9. The two seated statues flanking the entrance to the Royal Tomb of Qatna
(Photo: Konrad Wita, © Qatna project, IANES, University of Tübingen).

The interpretation that “singular objects” were meant to maintain a deceased’s individuality as long as they were directly associated with his bones and only refer to the group’s identity when the object is separated from the mortal remains, is also supported by the archaeological record of Tomb VII, which was discovered in 2009 beneath the western part of the Royal Palace of Qaṭna (Pfälzner and Dohmann-Pfälzner 2011, Pfälzner 2014, Dohmann et al. in prep.). This tomb seems to present us with the different stages that were detected in the Royal Tomb, but in a smaller space and a much higher and denser concentration of bones and finds. The oldest burials in this tomb seem to have been pushed to the rear when 16 wooden boxes were brought to the tomb. The contents of these boxes—individual, scattered bones, complete skeletons as well as precious finds—seem to present us with a summary of what happened in the Royal Tomb. The most plausible interpretation of this record is that these boxes were at least to some extent used in a different tomb, for instance the Royal Tomb, and then moved to Tomb VII filled with comingled remains (Pfälzner 2014, 145-147, 152, 2017, 158-159). While not a single box from the Tomb VII presents us with a homogenous picture of only one stage of existence of the dead, we can identify different emphases within different boxes. A box placed along the middle of the southern wall of the southern chamber (No. 3248, Fig. 10) for instance contained two complete individuals at the bottom and several for the most part preserved skeletons as well as numerous precious finds, like a gold bracelet with a lapis lazuli cylinder seal, a girdle made of metal foil and numerous stone vessels. The record of this box appears to present us, at least in the bottom layers, with burials that were still intact primary burials at a different place, before they were re-buried in aforementioned box.

A box that was set up along the middle of the northern wall of the northern chamber (No. 3246, Fig. 11) presents us with a very different record. It contained the largest amount of comingled fragments of human and animal bones but, in comparison to the number of bones, very few “singular objects”. One could imagine that this box was packed with the skeletal remains that were assembled in an ossuary, before it was moved to Tomb VII.

It is rather remarkable that in this tomb numerous special objects were stacked along the western sides of the tomb right next to the entrance. These included stone vessels with Egyptian inscriptions, an ivory figurine and numerous alabaster vessels (for a detailed publication of the archaeological record of Tomb VII see Dohmann et al. in prep.). It can be argued that if these objects were transferred with the bones to this possibly new burial location but were deposited aside from the dead individuals, the objects' meaning as markers of individuality had vanished and they, instead, maintained the cultural identity of the group.



Fig. 10. The box Inst. 3248 at the southern wall of the southern chamber with articulated skeletons towards the bottom of the box. Also visible are some small stone vessels between the bones (Photo: Marc Steinmetz, © Qaṭna project, IANES, University of Tübingen).



Fig. 11. The box Inst. 3246 at the northern wall of the northern chamber with comingled skeletal remains (Photo: Marc Steinmetz, © Qaṭna project, IANES, University of Tübingen).

The evidence from Qaṭna—especially from the Royal Tomb—suggests that the status of the deceased was changed up to three times. First, after the display of the corpse, the deceased was primarily buried and thereby integrated into the community of the nether-world. Second, the bones were transferred for instance to one of the sarcophagi, so that the status of the deceased changed, though the individual character was still visible and the dead was still directly provided with food offerings and could be individually remembered. Third, the dead lost their status as individuals and were integrated into a collective (for a more elaborate discussion of this topic see S. Lange 2014b, 89-100, 109-111, 2014c, 253). Tomb VII seems to present us with a snap-shot of these ritual treatments, possibly because the ritualistic cycle was interrupted at a different place, which had to be emptied and the contents transferred to Tomb VII, maybe because of a dynastic change or another drastic event (Pfälzner 2014, 152).

The different stages of existence of the deceased that we can trace in the archaeological record at Qaṭna, can, in the author's opinion, also be deduced from some Ugaritic texts. This is foremost

the Ugaritic text KTU 1.161, in which different terms for the beings in the Netherworld are used. The text was probably written on the occasion of the funerary ceremony of the second to last known king of Ugarit, Niqmaddu IV (ca. 1225–1215 BCE),¹⁴ who died at the end of the 13th century BCE.

KTU 1.161 (select lines)

(1)	<i>spr . dbḥ . ḏlm</i>	Tablet of the offering for the statues ¹⁵
(2)	<i>qritm ṛ . ṛpi . a[rṣ . . .]</i>	You are invited, <i>rāpiṣūma</i> of the nether[world]
(3)	<i>qbitm . qbṣ . d[dn . . .]</i>	You are summoned, assemblage of Di[dānu]
(4)	<i>qra . ulkn . ṛp¹ [u . . .]</i>	Invited is <i>ulkn</i> , the <i>rāpiṣu</i>
(5)	<i>qra . trmn . rp[u . . .]</i>	Invited is <i>trmn</i> , the <i>rāpiṣu</i>
(6)	<i>qra . sdn . w ṛ . ṛ rd[n . . .]</i>	Invited is <i>sdn-w-rd[n]</i>
(7)	<i>qra . ṭr . ḏlmn[. . .]</i>	Invited is <i>ṭr-ḏlmn</i>
(8)	<i>qru . rpim . qdmym[. . .]</i>	Invited are the ancient <i>rāpiṣūma</i>
(9)	<i>qritm . rpi . aṣ</i>	You are invited, <i>rāpiṣūma</i> of the netherworld
(10)	<i>qbitm . qbṣ . dd¹n¹</i>	You are called, assemblage of Didā ¹ nu ¹
(11)	<i>qra . ṁṭtm¹r . ṁ m¹l¹k</i>	Invited is Amittam ¹ ru ¹ , the k ¹ in ¹ g
(12)	<i>qra . u . nqm¹d¹ [.]¹mlk¹</i>	Invited as well is Niqmaddu, the ¹ king ¹ [...]
(22–23)	<i>tḥt (23)sdn . w . rdn .</i>	under (23) <i>sdn-w-rdn</i>
(23–24)	<i>tḥt . ṭr (24)ḏlmn .</i>	under <i>ṭr (24)ḏlmn</i>
(24)	<i>tḥt . rpim . qdm¹y¹m</i>	under the ancient <i>rāpiṣūma</i>
(25)	<i>tḥt . ṁṭtm¹r . mlk</i>	under Amittamru, the king,
(26)	<i>tḥm¹⁶ . u . nq[md] . mlk</i>	under Niq[maddu], the king, as well.

As has been argued elsewhere (S. Lange 2014b, 100–106, 109–111), the text KTU 1.161 differentiates three stages of the dead within the society of the netherworld: the *malākuma*, the individually

¹⁴ This king is conventionally known as Niqmaddu III but, according to the latest cognitions, the king in question was Niqmaddu IV (Tsumura 1993, 44, 47, Arnaud 1999, Niehr 2006b, 264–265 n. 55, 2008, 249, 2009, 333).

¹⁵ Whether the term *ḏlm* should be translated “shades” or “statues” has been discussed controversially (see S. Lange 2014b, 102, note b with further references).

¹⁶ To be read *tḥt* (Pardee 2002, 115 n. 129).

named *rāpi'ūma* and a collective of the *rāpi'ūma*.¹⁷ In lines 2-12 and 23-26, those are named whose ranks the recently deceased king Niqmaddu IV will join. The text lists amongst others the two deceased kings *Ammiṭtamru* and *Niqmaddu*, who bear the title *maliku* “king”. With this denomination they are clearly distinguished from the *rāpi'ūma*. The latter appear in different contexts—the “*rāpi'ūma* of the netherworld”, the “assemblage of *Didānu*”, and a group of individually named *rāpi'ūma*. The way the text is structured it seems that those who are called by name are summarized in the group of the “ancient *rāpi'ūma*” in the following line. Interestingly, the “*rāpi'ūma* of the netherworld” and the “assemblage of *Didānu*” in this text, as in the Ugaritic epic of Kirta,¹⁸ consistently appear as a parallelism. The term “ancient *rāpi'ūma*,” however, succeeds only the listing of personal names in KTU 1.161. In short, individually named *rāpi'ūma* and a collective of *rāpi'ūma* seem to have been differentiated. That this differentiation was made on purpose can safely be assumed and it shows that the people from Ugarit prescribed different stages of existence to their dead. Comparing these terms, and having the archaeological record of the Royal Tomb of Qaṭna in mind, the author would like to propose that a dead person entered the netherworld first of all as a “simple spirit”. Later on, he was exalted—probably by rituals—to become a *rāpi'u*, which the author understands as a term for ancestor. After an undefined period, he merged into the collective of ancestors, the “*rāpi'ūma* of the netherworld” (S. Lange 2014b, 109-111).

But what about the tombs from Ugarit? Do they support this interpretation and resemble the record that was found in the tombs of Qaṭna? And do they show any indications as for how the burials could shape or influence the collective memory? Since the Royal Tombs at Ugarit have been found robbed, the other tombs that were excavated throughout the domestic quarters of the city will have to provide the answers. However, even the graves that were found undisturbed by the excavators will not provide such detailed information as those at Qaṭna, simply due to their early

¹⁷ For a more elaborate discussion of the nature of the *rāpi'ūma* see *inter alia* S. Lange 2012, 165-167 with further references.

¹⁸ KTU 1.15 III, 3-4. 14-15 (see for instance Greenstein 1997, 9-48).

date of excavation in the first half of the 20th century and the common lack of detailed documentation as much as not yet introduced methods of analysis.

One example of a tomb with several burial stages is Tomb 51 at Ugarit (Fig. 12), which contained 66 individuals, of which 34 were re-buried in a separate small ossuary, 30 were interred in the main chamber and partly pushed back and two children were buried in the dromos before the tomb was closed. To re-deposit the bones in the ossuary, the mortal remains had to be picked up and passed-through an opening, 95 cm above the ground, and then dropped on the floor of the ossuary which was on the same level as the floor of the main chamber (Marchegay 1999b, 111-124). Thus, re-locating the bones to the ossuary required some very different actions than “simply” pushing the bones back to the wall. While we cannot observe any selection of certain body parts or distinct arrangements of bones, it can be noted that the grave goods were re-located together with the bones –this is true for those pushed against the wall and those transferred to the ossuary. Such a re-location of bones, either in ossuaries, in niches or pushed against a wall, was documented at Ugarit in various tombs, usually with associated grave goods. However, one striking example shows that this relocation is not necessarily dependent on the dissolving of the soft tissue. In tomb 69 a “primary burial” was, together with several ceramic vessels, pushed into a little annex-room, usually identified as an ossuary, which was accessible through an opening on ground level. This burial but also other, already disarticulated, burials within this tomb were, according to Marchegay, pushed aside to make room for new burials (Marchegay 1999b, 224-230).



Fig. 12. Tomb 51 at Ugarit, with the ossuary accessible through the opening in the wall (Schaeffer 1936, Pl. XX, 1).

Thus, in Ugarit, we see different ways of re-depositing the bones of the deceased, and, in the instance of tomb 69 it was even the complete corpse that was re-located. Do these different ways of dealing with the mortal remains indicate that the act of “pushing back” had the same ritual meaning as transferring bones to an ossuary? The individuals who were responsible for the clearing or simple pushing back of earlier remains would have had to deal with both fully and partially disarticulated human remains; flesh, bone, hair, all these substances would presumably have been encountered, so perhaps in this respect even a simple shifting of remains would have involved a transformation, not only of the *dead*, but also of the *living* and the memories they linked with the deceased. But is the act of pushing back that happened at Ugarit comparable to the secondary burials at Qatna? And is the often-encountered transfer

of single bones to the ossuary equivalent to the tertiary burial of single bones in the ossuary of the Royal Tomb at Qatna? These conclusions cannot be drawn for sure, since we don't have sufficient information on the state of articulation or disarticulation of human and animal bones or the way the objects were deposited in connection with the bones at Ugarit. Hence, while it is very plausible that the relocation of bones involved some level of symbolism, maybe even comparable to the one deduced for the Royal Tomb of Qatna or interpreted in the Ugaritic text KTU 1.161, it can still not be excluded that these actions may have been carried out primarily as a space saving exercise.

In sum, the example of the Royal Tomb from Qatna and mostly the Ugaritic texts suggest that in the Late Bronze Northern Levant an *ancestor's collective* was perceived as part of a deceased's destination. Do we also find indications for such a collective in death in the IA? What about collective burials in the IA Northern Levant? To the author's knowledge, collective burials in the sense of an ossuary did not exist in this period and region. While we do have collective tombs in which several individuals received their primary burials together (e.g. in 'Amrid [Elayi and Haykal 1996] or Tomb V at Byblos [Montet 1928, 143-263, 1929, Pl. LXXII-CXLVIII]) and we have other graves for which the idea of secondary burials can be discussed, as is the case for all cremation burials (for instance in Tyre-Al Bass [Aubert 2004, 2006, 2010, 2011]), if we follow Candida Felli's and others suggestion (Felli 2017 with further references), these burials still differ very significantly from the here presented LBA burials: In the IA Northern Levant a comingling of bones does not seem to exist. The deceased received either an inhumation or a cremation burial but were, apparently, not manipulated once placed into the ground. Considering the above-mentioned grave inscriptions and the manufacturing of individualized sarcophagi, it was of much greater importance to maintain the individuality of the deceased in the IA than it was in the LBA, when the dead could be integrated into a collective.

A dead's collective in the collective memory?

While we could see that deceased individuals in the 2nd as much as in the 1st millennium BCE were, partly mediated by associated grave goods or monuments, commemorated and especially for their political value elevated and used to emphasize social hierarchies and very likely to form group identities, it can also be concluded that the attempt to maintain one's own individuality seems to have increased from the Late Bronze to the Iron Age. It can also be suggested that the standard ritual cycle—which included the deceased individual, the individual ancestor and the ancestor's collective—should be separated at least in the 2nd millennium BCE from the collective memory that still valued certain individuals. Nonetheless it seems that the inclusion in a collective after death was tried to be averted in the 1st millennium BCE. That this development is due to more hierarchical influences from the imperial neighbors, while in the 2nd millennium the nomadic heritage might still have played a dominant role that resulted in the existence of a collective even after death, can only be assumed.

At Ugarit or Qaṭna no statues or stelae were found that can be ascribed to any individual dead that was provided with ritual offerings.¹⁹ In fact, aside from the two identical ancestor statues at Qaṭna, the author doesn't think that we can ascribe a single stele or statue from these two places to the realm of death. This does, of course, not mean that they didn't exist. But it is highly interesting that in places, where the ritual cycle apparently culminated—most likely due to practical reasons—in the care for the collective such individually assignable statues or stelae have not been found to this day.

The question that is most interesting with regard to the topic of this publication is, how does the collective memory comprise the idea of a collective of the dead? Or rather, is the concept of a collective of ancestors compatible with a collective memory at all? The answer is “No”. Images were created upon death, inscriptions were written and, very likely, even though at Qaṭna and Ugarit not

¹⁹ A different interpretation with regard to Ugarit was still favored in S. Lange 2012, 175-178.

traceable, memories of dead individuals were maintained for instance with statues. These memories of the deceased individuals became part of the *communicative* memory and, depending on the person's importance for a family or even society, *cultural* memory. It is highly questionable that in cases like the example of the veneration of Sargon and Narām-Sîn by kings who ruled almost 500 years later, the ritual care for the dead had been continuously performed for these two individuals by their successors. It seems much more likely that instead they had, in ritual terms, long been taken care for in the collective of ancestors. But even though they were most likely ritually integrated into the ancestor's collective, they remained as individuals in the collective memory. Why is that? A collective of the dead is an artificial construct, which is, in the author's opinion created to keep the ritual activities in a reasonable extent without neglecting the care for the dead. But this collective of dead ancestors is nothing specific that anyone could *remember*—there are no deeds, no objects, no memories that can be ascribed to this collective. The dead's collective did not exist as an entity during lifetime and differs from possibly existing living collectives like a council of elders, but was created by the bereaved by assembling deceased individuals in a group. Thus, since in the collective memory actually once living persons and their deeds were commemorated and their individuality was emphasized, collective grave sites and artificially constructed collectives of the dead cannot have played a role in the collective memory.

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Consented Violence in the Collective Memory: the Lachish Case from Epigraphic and Iconographic Data

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Résumé. Pourquoi les annales royales et les bas-reliefs de la pièce XXXVI du palais de Sennachérib sont-ils si vagues quant à l'identification de la ville assiégée ? Sennachérib aurait-il voulu suggérer à travers Lachish la prise de Jérusalem, que ses armées ne conquièrent jamais ? Et comment la disposition des bas-reliefs dans le palais et dans la pièce, notamment par rapport à la lumière et au public auquel les bas-reliefs étaient destinés, jouent-ils un rôle dans la compréhension intellectuelle et émotionnelle du message royal ?

Recent works of neuroscientists have completely changed our understanding of brain functions about emotions and memory. Against the theory, largely prevailing before the 1980s, of only a conscious formation of emotions solicited by visual objects, it is now generally accepted that two are the routes of emotions and of memory, one conscious (located in the neocortex) and one nonconscious (directed by the amygdala, a subcortical region situated deep in the temporal lobe).¹ There are not only biological elements

¹ Following the ideas of Carl von Clausewitz (2006, appeared posthumous after the author's death in 1831). Cf. Suter (2018 and 2014), Ataç (2010), Liverani (2010). Psychological studies (Arnheim 2004) underline the importance of visual perception as an immediate kind of understanding, the base for the possibility of language. Other studies focused on the direct relationship between intensity of image and strength of their record (Barry 1997: 17): the stronger and more intense an image, the longer and more important its recording. Our memory is biologically and evolutionary influenced (Barry 1997: 16-18). According to LeDoux (1989, 1996, 2012), LeDoux and Hirst (1986), Barry (1997: 17-48), visual stimuli and emotions that are created by them are mediated by several brain regions, especially by the amygdala. It's the amygdala that alerts the autonomic nervous system (production of hormones to prepare a muscular fight) and the brain (secretion of chemicals to keep alert). The amygdala works in both conscious and nonconscious

that influence our understanding of images, but also personal, social and exceptional ones.² Stress is recognized as a factor that reduces the consciousness and enables people to believe what in normal situation they would not. The typical example is the “brain-washing propaganda” on prisoners of war.³ On the other side, psychologists, art historians and philosophers are working on the perception of images and on the collective memory. The psychological effects of images are no longer underestimated.⁴ According to recent theories, the more intense is the emotion aroused by an image, the longer our brain will record it. Images of blood, decapitation, destruction, siege, deportation are the strongest way of the Assyrian empire to convey a political message. But in the case of the reliefs, it is perhaps also a rewriting of historical events and by so a consented memory. According to new brain researches, indeed, collective memory can not be otherwise than politically controlled.

input. The other regions of the brain control emotions after cognition, especially the neocortex, which analyses the signals and send them to the amygdala. Emotions, so, have two routes, one more direct and nonconscious, one more long-holding and conscious. “Emotional response can and does bypass cognitive processing, conscious or unconscious, and both rational and emotional processing are essential for our perceptual health” (Barry 1997: 19). Prefrontal cortex is responsible for working memory (Barry 1997: p.18). And our perception is strongly linked to the eye, that is with the electric signals that the eye sends to the brain, where they are analyzed and given meaning that is not the “real environment” but only an interpretation of it, double biased by the eye and the brain (Barry 1997: 35-38). Visual memory is constantly shifting and changing, it’s never the same in two people.

² Barry (1997: p.17-38); Ledoux and Hirst (1986).

³ Barry (1997: 24-25).

⁴ On the psychological effects of war, the works of Carl von Clausewitz (especially 2006) are very persuasive. The psychological affects of Mesopotamian war images has been considered particularly by Miglus (2003, 2008); Dolce (2005, 2012 and 2018); Liverani (2010); Collins (2014, especially 636-638); Battini (2018, ed 2016). For Neo-Assyrian palace reliefs, see Ornan (2013 and 2004), Ataç (2010), Pittman (1996), and Winter (1997 and 1981). And for other periods, at last Suter (2018, 2014), Asher-Greve (1989), Winter (2010a and 2010b).

I. Textual Data

The siege of Lachish⁵ (**figure 1**) is one of the historical events of the third campaign of Sennacherib. The sources of this event are three: Sennacherib's Annals, the Bible (Second book of Kings, Isaiah and Chronicles)⁶ and Herodotus. It is worth mentioning this exceptional advantageous situation: one source from the winners, one from the vanquished, and one from an external source. For once historians dispose of very different points of view, and this is not so frequent.⁷ None of them fits together: this motivates even more the analysis. All are written to show the "bad example", the Judeans for the Assyrians, the Assyrians for the Judeans, strange people for the Greeks. None is an objective historical description of events, but none is pure invention.⁸ For example, the Assyrian text is constructed following the structure of the mythological fights, especially that between Nergal and Anzu, as recently suggested by Mander and Pongratz Leisten.⁹ Another example: in the Second Book of Kings, Hezekiah is presented in perfect conformity

⁵ The bibliography concerning the Lachish relief is extraordinary rich. The relief is photographed in Barnett, Bleibtreu & Turner (1998: pl. 322-352) with the plan of the room (pl. 322) and the localization of the reliefs. It has been studied lastly by Uehlinger (2003), Gillman (2010) and Ussishkin and Feinberg-Vamosh (2015). Ussishkin had already studied the reliefs (1982, 2003, 2006, 2014, 2015 and 2017).

⁶ For the Annals of Sennacherib, see Grayson & Novotny (2014). The 3 passages of the Bible concerned with the siege of Lachish are: II King 18- 19; Isaiah 36.2-37.8; Chronicles 32.9. For the relations between Assyria and the Levant, see Frahm (2017: 396-404) and also Cogan & Tadmor (1988).

⁷ Cf. Aster and Faust (2018: 2-3).

⁸ For the historical approach of the Lachish siege, see, for the Assyrian sources: Millard (1985); for the Biblical sources: Finkelstein and Silberman (2001: 252-254), cf. Dubovsky (2016).

⁹ Mander (2016) and Pongratz Leisten (2015). I found intriguing the use in the Assyrian Annals of worlds taken from the *Maqlu* and *Shurpu* series as well as from other magical texts. It's not a feature of Sennacherib, but this use of magical words can hardly be fortuitous. Worlds as *abatu* (destroy), *hepû*, *halâqu* (disappear, destroy, ruin) pertain better to the magical domain than to war description. But this is a too modern point of view: for Mesopotamians, war is a kind of divine ordeal (see lastly Liverani 2014). Using magical words could serve to manipulate the reality and arrive to the hoped results.

with Mesopotamian description of kings (without rival, beautiful, beloved of gods...¹⁰).

The points of major differences¹¹ between textual sources concern three points:

1) first of all, the role of Jerusalem: was the city conquered or not?¹²

2) Second, if Sennacherib conquered Jerusalem, why did he represent the siege of Lachish?

3) And third, is it really the siege of Lachish? The siege of the city is never mentioned in the Annals of Sennacherib: it is only the cuneiform caption of room XXXVI that enables us to identify the siege. But even in the captions, there is no mention of the siege of Lachish (**figure 2**). What is incised in the room XXXVI at Nineveh is the booty of this city: “Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria, sat in a *nemedu*-throne and the booty of Lachish passed in review before him.” And the label over the tent (“Tent of Sennacherib, king of Assyria”) is not concerned with the city represented in the previous reliefs being destroyed by the Assyrian army.

In the other rooms with cuneiform labels on the relief of a siege (**table A**), all the labels emphasize the material destruction of the city. Only the labels in room XXXVI and in room V do not follow this scheme. But in room V, one of the labels declares the destruction of the city, and this does not happen in room XXXVI. Finally, the relation between text and relief is perhaps not so direct as in general is imagined: four rooms conserve a label concerning a destruction without the representation of a siege.¹³

So, nothing can prove without a doubt that the siege represented is really that of Lachish. What is so attractive with images is their ambiguity. The siege of room XXXVI of SW Palace at Nineveh can be that of any city in the Levant, perhaps it was considered that

¹⁰ Suter (2012, especially 445-446); Winter (1996: 11-26).

¹¹ There are also some “minor” historical errors: for example, there were not 10 years between Salmanaser V and Sennacherib’s campaign, as said in II King.

¹² Was there an arrangement without fight and siege? Or was there a siege attempt that failed?

¹³ Russell (1991: 117-119, 152-168).

of Jerusalem. What was the geographical knowledge of people entering the palace? Could they distinguish between Lachish and Jerusalem?¹⁴

Another important point concerns the readability of the captions. It's not only the problem of knowing who was able to read cuneiform in an Aramaic-speaking world, but it is also the presence or absence of conditions that allow people to read the captions. In other words, are captions at an easy and normal height, and exposed to sufficient light or not? Light is an important point, not only in architecture but also in the reliefs, although it is often overlooked.¹⁵ If there is not enough light, nobody entering the room could read the caption. In room XXXVI, the captions are at a height of 1.60m, perfect to be seen.¹⁶ For the light there is no easy answer, it depends on the architectural restitution and remains conjectural: walls are not conserved to sufficient height to allow a direct

¹⁴ "Such are the ends of Asia and Libya. As for those of Europe in the West, I can say nothing certain; for I will not agree that the barbarians call Eridan a river which flows into the North Sea, and **of which amber is said to come to us**. I do not know either the Cassiterides Islands, from which they bring us tin: the very name of the river is a proof of my feeling. Eridanos is not a barbarous word, it is a Greek name invented by some poet. **Moreover, I have never found anyone who could tell me, as an eyewitness, what is this sea that is placed in this region of Europe.** What is certain is that tin and amber come from this end of the world" (Herodotus, III, 106-116).

This passage of Herodotus suggests that for us it is difficult to understand what ancient people knew of their world, and that what was not known is inevitably strange and exotic. This passage reminds us also that people heard of the existence of other *barbaroi* without travelling, but only by stories, rich in strange details. If Herodotus, who was cultivated and open-minded, spoke in these terms of other people, I suppose that one century before, the situation must not have been so different, and for a middle-class urban Assyrian—which means not from the elite or the rural countryside—Judah had to be at the end of the world, and as strange as Europeans were for Herodotus.

¹⁵ In his architectural studies (1982, 1986, 1996, 2012), Margueron has always studied light, and he always tried to encourage colleagues to study it. Since then, more and more archaeologists keep in mind this element in their architectural or artistic analysis, and one of the first conference on this topic took place in London in 2010 (Matthews & Curtis 2012).

¹⁶ I take this measurement directly from the photograph, knowing the height of the slab, but there can be a few centimeters of difference. Brogiolo and Cagnana (2012: 51-52).

experience of the windows. But even hypothetical, it is better to explore all the possibilities.¹⁷

Table A. Cuneiform labels in SW Palace at Nineveh

Room no	Slab/position	Label in cuneiform
I	slab 1	"The city [GN], his royal city, with fire [I burned]"
	slab 4a	"The city of [GN] I besieged, I conquered"
III	slab 8	"Dilbat I besieged, I conquered, I carried off its spoils"
V	slab 11	"Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria, 'the booty' of Kasuši (?) passed in review before him."
	slab 30	"[Sennacherib king of the world], king of [Assyria, the booty] of [GN] passed in review before him"
	slab 35	"The city of Aranziaš I besieged, I conquered, I carried off its spoil"
XIV	slab 10	"The city of Alammu I besieged, I conquered, I carried off its spoil"
XXXVI	slab 12	"Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria, sat in a nemedu-throne and the booty of Lachish passed in review before him." "Tent of Sennacherib, king of Assyria"
XXXVIII	not sure: "over one of the castle"	"The city..."
XLV	slab 2	"[...]" [...]

¹⁷ Most of archaeologists avoid the architectural restitution, because of the risk of being wrong. And perhaps sometimes because of the lack of training in architectural researches. This rejection is similar to what the epigraphs would have if they refused to translate fragmentary texts: when it is clearly signaled, restitution is not only possible but even preferable. Why is this scientific rule, used by epigraphists, rejected by archaeologists? Space is three-dimensional (Zevi 2009): archaeologists would so give back the volume to the only bi-dimensional architecture found in the excavations. On the importance of restitution, see Margueron (at least 1986, 1996 and 2012).

		the booty [of GN] passed [in review] before [him].”
XLVII	“near the castle”	“I carried off its spoil, I tore (it) down, I demolished (it), with fire I burned (it)”.
LX	slab 2	“Bit-Kubatti I besieged, I conquered, I carried off its spoil, with fire I burned”.
LXX	slab 4	“Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria, the booty of the marshes of Sahrina passed in review before him.”
TOTAL	out of 10 captions, booty is mentioned in 3 rooms only: XXXVI: West campaign – XLV: East campaign – LXX: South campaign.	

Room XXXVI is in third line of courtyard XIX (**figure 3**), which receives direct sunlight and dispenses it to the surrounding rooms.¹⁸ Rooms with direct access to the court (in first line) have direct daylight and are very clear. Rooms in second line, that is rooms not directly accessible from the courtyard but through a room, receive light considered barely sufficient but not brilliant. On the contrary, rooms in third line—that is with an access to the courtyard through two rooms—were dark, no sufficient light arrived in them, being too far away from the light of the courtyard. So, room XXXVI was practically dark (**figure 4a**). But there is another possibility: room XXXVI could be in second line. We can imagine, in fact, that the suite of two rooms XXIX and XXXIV has no second storey and so, each room can search for direct light from the clerestory windows. So, room XXXVI is in second line, having sufficient light from room XXXIV (**figure 4b**).

There is another item to consider. The captions in room XXXVI are not in axis with the entrance, where some light passes, but in a perpendicular axis. This position limits the benefits of direct light

¹⁸ For a good description of how light enters in a building, see at least for ancient times Margueron (1986 and 1996), and for modern times Reiter and De Herde (2004), Moore (1985). In Middle Age archaeology, light is better considered (see for ex. the international conference held in Lyon in 2011: *Of glasses and stones: lightening in Middle Age architecture*, organised by Nicolas Reveyron, at the University of Lyon 2).

and raises again the question of readability of cuneiform inscriptions.

In conclusion, there is no specific mention of the Lachish siege, the inscription has not a prominent or special position in the room, the light was dim if not dark and only those who were allowed to enter the palace and who were able to read the captions could suppose that the reliefs of room XXXVI represented Lachish. But for the most part, it's only a representation of war in the west, perhaps quickly identified with Jerusalem. The ambiguity of the image depends on its absence of specificity: it's a standardised version of the Assyrian attack to a city, as we will see soon.

II. Architectural Data

The representation of Lachish is a part of a larger program decided by Sennacherib and his most intimate counselors. We can not make abstraction from the setting of the representation inside the building. That is, not only it's important to study the relations between different representations in the same palace but also to analyse the strong connections between architecture and bas reliefs.¹⁹ The difficulties arise from the incomplete conservation of the reliefs, from the later works of Assurbanipal, from the partial understanding of the palace (even the identification of the throne room is discussed) and from the knowledge of certain parts of it from drawings. The palace is known only partially: according to the inscription, it was 914 cubits \times 440 cubits, which means 503 m \times 242 m.²⁰ The total surface had to be 121,726 m² (more than 12 hectares). The excavations have exhumed 36,000 m², that is 3.6 hectares, possibly 1/3 of the palace. We know so little that we can hardly find even the general layout. Once all the reconstructions have been removed (**figure 5**),

¹⁹ The strong connection was recognized since Meuszyński (1981), who tried to find the original position of the reliefs. And, after his premature death, by Paley and Sobolewsky (1987, 1992). Reade (1979a, 1979b, 1980) and Russell (1991, 1998) also wrote a number of clever articles and books on the topic, which still stays not so much analyzed by scholars.

²⁰ Russell (1991: 36).

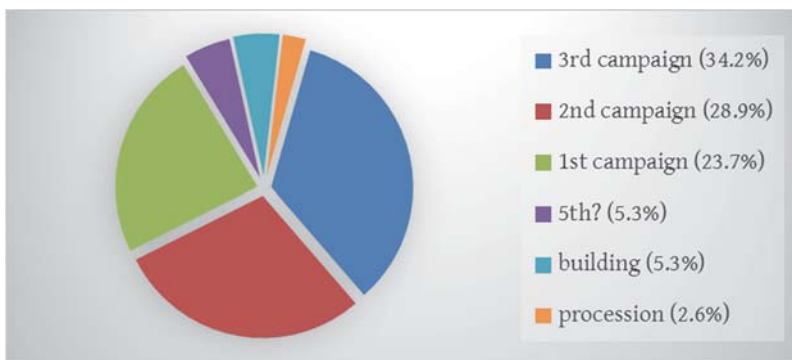
one understands how the palace is known in a very approximate way, even the so-called throne room.

Russell proposed to identify Assurbanipal's reliefs in 4 rooms: XIX, XXVIII, XXXIII, and some reliefs of room XXII.²¹ On the contrary, reliefs of rooms XL and XLI can not be definitely assigned to one king, because of the coarseness of the sketches left.²² Following Russell, Sennacherib's program considered essentially the first three campaigns, perhaps some images of the fifth but unfinished, and one procession and two construction works (**figure 6**). Eight years ago, Jeffers (2011) proposed to see some events of the fifth campaign in rooms XXXVIII and XLVIII (plus the throne room, following the study of E. Frahm who in 1994 was successful to restore an inscription of this room which concerns the fifth campaign). So, probably the palace represented the first 6 campaigns of Sennacherib.

²¹ Russell (1991: 119-151). The origin of the reliefs in room XXXIII are still discussed, probably mostly Assurbanipal with ancient Sennacherib ones reused (Russell 1991: 134-135). Nagel tried to resolve the problem by attributing the reliefs to the young Assurbanipal, who was linked to his father's artists (1967: 27-30). Reade (1979b: 23- 25) accepted this hypothesis, arguing that the content of one of the inscriptions confirmed a date at the beginning of Assurbanipal's reign. The problem is that the king represented in the Room and identified by the inscription is Assurbanipal (Russell 1991: 118-119).

²² Russell (1991: 139, fig. 23 p. 38).

Table B. Distribution of subjects in the SW Palace at Nineveh



The third campaign is represented in 14 rooms, 12 wholly and 2 partially. In fact, Sennacherib's artists chose most frequently to decorate a room with only one subject.²³ 12 rooms represented the 2nd campaign and 9 the 1st (**table B**). The 3rd campaign seems to be the most represented, but for a true relation between architecture and campaigns' representations, we must make the count of the decorated surfaces of each represented campaign, that is, the measurements of all walls decorated with the same campaign.²⁴ The measurements of the walls decorated fits apparently well with the result obtained from considering the number of rooms: the most represented is the west campaign. If we now consider only the 3rd campaign, it is clear that it is represented in all the four parts of the palace (around court VI, around court XIX, in the southern unit and in the western one). On the contrary the first campaign is absent around court XIX's unit. The 3rd campaign has more subjects represented in 2 units: one around the court VI and one in the southern unit (each unit has 5 rooms decorated with the western campaign).

We can go further. The reliefs decorated the walls of room XXXVI. It's a very little room, the 3rd smallest of the palace. Of course, given the dimensions of the palace, in comparison with Neo-Assyrian houses and even with modern ones, it's a large room

²³ There are three exceptions, that is 9,1% of 33 reliefs.

²⁴ Measures taken from the plans and photos, so there is a possible margin of error (Brogiolo and Cagnana 2012: 52).

(5 m × 11.3 m, that is 56.5 m²). But in the economy of Sennacherib's palace, it is a very little room in comparison with what is considered the throne room.

Unfortunately, the plan of the palace is only partially known,²⁵ and our point of view is also biased by the difficulties of a good comprehension of the palace architecture, notably the problem of *babanu* and *bitanu*. In fact, room XXXVI is considered to be in the sector of the *bitanu*. But what is the *bitanu*? Generally scholars consider *bitanu* the inner courtyard of the palace and the *babanu* the official one (where the throne room opens).²⁶ The problem is that in the SW palace, there are 3 courtyards. According to certain scholars, Sennacherib's palace innovates in doubling the *bitanu* (courts VI and XIX).²⁷ But according to others, on the contrary, the *bitanu* is courtyard XIX only, and so the innovation of Sennacherib is to add a court between the *bitanu* and the *babanu*. That makes no sense in comparison with what we know from previous palaces. The question of *bitanu* and *babanu* is essential to understand the audience of room XXXVI. Does this room pertain to the *bitanu* or not? And what do we consider the *bitanu*? Are the rooms around the *bitanu* private apartments, that is, were they used for the private life of the king, frequented for example by the wives? Or were they also official rooms? Have a look at the perfect and scenographic construction of rooms around court XIX (**figure 7**). All this palace is of a great conception and this is true for court XIX, because we know better this part of the palace. At the first look, there is a regularity that appears in the localization of entries. Each room has 3 or 4, less often 2 entries on the same wall. And a great part of the conserved doorways are in axis with one or two other doorways. This gives rhythm based on 3 or 4, sometimes a binary one (**Figure 8**). And in the variety of repetition of the same modules, there is no annoyance.²⁸ So, this localization of entries suggests the idea of symmetry that is reinforced by the rooms' organization. The rooms have been constructed in binary order or less in rhythm

²⁵ Cf. Kertai (2015, 2014); Heinrich (1984).

²⁶ Kertai (2014, 2015). Cf. CAD B p. 7a and 274b-275a.

²⁷ For ex. Invernizzi (1992).

²⁸ Zevi (2009: 46-48) emphasizes the importance, in the symmetrical constructions, of elements avoiding the feeling of annoyance. Cf. Fusco *et alii* (2013 *passim*).

based on 3—as the doorways—to avoid annoyance depending on too much uniformity (**figure 9**). Most of the rooms are large halls parallel to one another, rarely parallel to a range of smaller rooms. 3 times only, there is a group of 3 lines, that is composed by two great halls and at the end a range of smaller rooms (2 cases: IX-XI and XXIX-XXXVII) or two rooms divided by a range of smaller rooms (1 case: XIII and XLIII). The organization of rooms allows to find in the remaining part of the palace the existence of 14 geometrical major units (**Figure 10**). It's a very nice construction based on the principle of “same but different”.

This analysis proves what is clear from a non-preconceived analysis of previous palaces and also of this palace: the *bitanu* is one of the most important centres of the royal propaganda. We can say “official” but certainly not in the same way as the throne room. That means that court XIX and room XXXVI have not the same frequentation as the throne room, in terms of quantity and quality. To appreciate how wide was its audience, I considered three elements forgotten from previous studies. First of all, the anthropometrical analysis, second the light and third the axis of construction of room XXXVI. According to the anthropometric studies, 1 medium-size person ($1,75 \times 0,75\text{m}$) occupies 1.3 m^2 .²⁹ We know that the surface of room XXXVI was 56.3 m^2 . So a maximum of 43 persons could stay in that room. That excluded large delegations of foreign people, but not for example the chief of such a delegation. These apartments are not private in the sense that they were frequented by family members, but perhaps in the sense that only some guests could enter them. They are less official, less open to everyone. And probably linked to the religious hallmark of the king.

In the first part of this paper I considered the light as the only possibility to read the cuneiform captions incised in room XXXVI. Here, I would like to consider light as a way to read the image. It's not the same light: an image could need a soft light or a shadow because of the specific necessities of the emotional and psychological effects that the artist wants to produce.³⁰ The disposition of the

²⁹ Lohman *et alii* (1992); Masali (2013). In traditional architecture, anthropometric measures are fundamental. But with the mechanization of building, we lost the evidence of this connection between human body and construction.

³⁰ Cf. for ex. Tomassoni *et alii* (2015); Ginthner (2004).

reliefs (**figure 11**) in the room depends also in part on the effects they want to produce. Slabs that are in axis with the doorway have more light than the others because the light entered from the opening and went into the room following an axial direction. This position is then the most dramatic, the most emotional and probably chosen for the relief of the narration considered not simply the most important, but rather the most emotional. In room XXXVI, this is the attack of the city. Even the king and his camp are in a less visible and bright position.

But we have to consider another element. Room XXXVI is perfectly in axis with the entrances of rooms XXXIV and XXIX. That means that, from court XIX, one can have a look at the siege represented in room XXXVI. Is it possible then to say that everybody passing into the court could see the reliefs? It depends on the distance. The further from the south-western side of court XIX, the less visible the reliefs. From the doorway between court XIX and room XXIX to the wall showing the “Lachish” siege, there are already 40m, and the city attacked in the siege occupies all the height of the relief (2m conserved), so it could have been visible from the court. And if the artists chose to build this succession of entrances in axis, it means that they wanted to leave visible the inside of room XXXVI from the court, but also to give relevance to this access (perhaps not the only one in the palace). This is an example of the strong connection between architecture and sculpture.³¹

In sum, the first three campaigns are widely represented in the palace, with a particular accent on the third. The reason is probably merely chronological: the palace started to be decorated around the 3rd-4th campaign (we know from different texts that several phases of construction of this palace ended in 691). The third campaign is the most represented in number of rooms as well as in surface, at least in the conserved parts. But slabs in room XXXVI are not in the throne room, one of the most accessible room for common people, they are in the interior part of the palace. They could be well seen (inside) by a small number of persons, but quickly seen (from the courtyard) by a much larger audience. Reliefs are exposed to different lights to solicit specific effects of political communication as we see now. We know better the southern

³¹ Cf. note 19.

unit of the palace, around court XIX, so the accent on room XXXVI can be due to our misunderstanding of the other parts of the palace. There is probably another part, which is constructed in the same way as the southern unit, room IX, X and XI. But it is true that the succession of rooms XIX, XXXIV, XXXVI results in the most scenographic construction. That means that the 3 doorway jambs have to be decorated in a manner to stress the siege of room XXXVI, as we are going to see.

III. Iconological Data

As for the texts, also for the images it's better to remember that they certainly do not provide a full and clear account of the war, they were not intended to be an objective description of battles—and neither are we sure that the artists or some of them followed the Assyrian army. But they are not fake and, being a contemporary source, at least one part of their reproduction corresponds to a real situation.³²

The so-called Lachish siege is not the only one in this palace. The focus is particularly on this siege because of the Bible. But the palace conserves at least 15 images of siege, 2 assigned to Assurbanipal, the others to Sennacherib. Their position is very different: some are in large halls—like room V, behind the throne room—others in very small corridors (room XII), and most of them (66.7%) in small rooms³³ (like XXXVI, XIV, XVII), perhaps because it was easier to dedicate a single subject to a little room (identity of space and representation).³⁴ The siege (**table C**) can occupy from 1 to 5 slabs in their entire surface in 66.7% of cases or less often a part of the slab, half, one third or even a quarter of it. The position of the siege in the room cannot be established with certainty in all cases,

³² For the importance of the images see at least Panovsky (1992, 2009), Arnheim (1969). More specifically for the ancient Near East see Winter (1981, 2010a, 2010b), Cooper (1990), Seidl (2000), Ataç (2010), Ornan (2004, 2013), Suter (2014, 2019). See also note 4 of this article.

³³ Relatively small rooms, that is in comparison with the dimensions of the palace: cf. *supra*.

³⁴ Cf. Russell (1991: 169-171).

but when it is surely known it is in front of the entrance in 70% of representations, especially when the siege is in large rooms.

If there are as many siege representations for the eastern campaign as for the western one, on the contrary there is none for the southern campaign. Is it the status of Babylon as a religious city that prevents to represent the destruction of Babylonian cities? Probably. Sennacherib never represented the destruction of that southern capital, even if he claimed to have done it. This proves also that the relations between Annals and representations are not so direct as we usually suppose and they have not the same aims and cannot represent actions in the same manner.

In the previous section, I emphasized the importance of an axis of symmetry in the construction of room XXXVI. This is attested also for other sieges: out of the 10 sieges whose position is surely known, 7 (70%) are in front of the entryway, 3 in perpendicular axis. This more dramatic position is used for both campaigns, the eastern one and the western one. For example, in room V, behind the throne room, there is a siege of an eastern city in the axis of the doorway from court VI.

If we consider now the subject, the mode of representation and the construction of the scene, there is no clear difference between the representations of siege in the West and in the East (**figure 12**).³⁵ For both, the artists used two kinds of representation of siege: one is ending or has just ended, and the other is still in action, as in room XXXVI. In the first case, the representation insists on a newly found order quite established: very few warriors are represented on both sides of the city besieged and all the rest of the scene is quiet and orderly.

Table C. Disposition of siege on slabs and inside the room

Room no	Slabs	Siege	Campaign	Room kind	Front
V	35-36	<i>all the 2 slabs</i>	East	hall behind throne room	yes
XII	13-14	<i>all the 2 slabs</i>	West	corridor	no
XIV	8-11 (+ 7?)	<i>all the 4 slabs</i>	East	little room	yes

³⁵ Cf. on the contrary Gunter (1982). She suggests that Assyrian reliefs, at least since Salmanassar III, show a small regional differentiation from Salmanassar III, even if she itemizes the limits of likeness of Assyrian reliefs especially in bronze.

XVII	7	? (partially con- served)	mountains	little room	no
XXXII	1-5	<i>all the 5 slabs</i>	East	little room	no
XXXVI	6b-8	<i>2 ½ slabs</i>	West	little room	yes
XXXVIII	13	<i>¼ slab</i>	West	Hall	yes
XLIII	fr. n.481a, 482a	all but frag.	West (Russell) East (Barnett)	Hall	?
XLV	5	<i>½ slab</i>	East	little room	yes
XLVII	1 slab (n.509)	frag.	East	little room	?
XLVIII	12 left	<i>¼ slab</i>	West	like corridor	yes
LXVII	1-3	<i>all (2 and 3); 1= fragm</i>	West	hall	yes
unat- tributed	n. 691	all (but frag.)		?	?
TOTAL:		Entire surface	East: 5 (38.5%)	hall: 4	yes: 7
14 rooms		of slabs: 66.7%	West: 5 (38.5%)	(33.3%); little	(70%);
		(6 out of 9	Mountain: 1	room: 6	no: 3
		cases), partial	Uncertain: 2	(66.7%); cor-	(30%)
		surface of the	South?	ridor: 2; un-	
		slab 33.3%		known: 1	

On the contrary, when the action is still in progress, Assyrian warriors are represented fighting on both sides of the city, and sometimes in the middle of it; the composition is full of oblique lines, charged of tension, used to emphasize the progression of the Assyrian army (cf. the Lachish siege for the 3rd campaign and the Aranzias siege for the 2nd campaign). Cities are represented in the same standardized way: one wall for the lower town, another for the acropolis. Differences in size of fortified towers, in type and size of battlements and gates cannot be attributed to a regional reason nor to a direct sight of different conquered cities. In fact, cities in the west (third campaign) are represented in very different manners, in a word there is no regional uniformity. Also in the representation of eastern cities (second campaign) there are so many manners to represent towers, battlements, gates that there is no regional uniformity. Furthermore, it can happen that eastern cities are more similar to western ones than to the eastern. It is

dangerous to identify cities on the basis of similarities to what is considered “typical” eastern or western. This raises the question: did the artists follow the army to draw sketches of the battles and of the cities besieged³⁶ or did they hear about them from the telling of soldiers and of the king?

IV. The Consented Memory

“L’œuvre d’art précède et annonce, mais elle fixe aussi le souvenir ; elle assure la pérennité d’un événement, le préserve.” (Philippe Joutard)

With its share of dead and wounded, war required an ideological basis that explained and even justified it:³⁷ the different subjects and the different ways in which war was represented provide a basis for reflection about political strategies and propaganda, and different reading levels of artistic/craft production and the goals of power. In other words, this will give some insights on the political value of the war scenes. In Sennacherib’s palace, the accent is on wars, or better on military expeditions, but it seems that more important than the attacks is the booty, the submission of all people, of all goods to the figure of Sennacherib.

The case of the Lachish relief offers the special opportunity to understand memory at different levels and different periods, from the VIIth century BCE to the IIIrd millennium CE. The modern stress on this relief is essentially due to our biblical memory, but it was not in Sennacherib palace, where the so-called Lachish siege was only one of the fifteen sculpted on the walls. From the Assyrian point of view, there is no epigraphic focus on the siege of Lachish in Sennacherib’s Annals, nor clear claim of the siege of Jerusalem, there is no specific iconographic characterization of the city attacked, nor the choice of a special and widely frequented room. In a word, of the third campaign of Sennacherib we have more silences than words. According to Vencel,³⁸ archaeologists have to ask more often questions on the absence of certain data to reach a new

³⁶ Reade (1976: 95-96). On this problem, see lastly Villard (2015).

³⁷ Cf. note 9.

³⁸ Vencel (1984).

understanding of ancient societies. From the silences of Sennacherib, we can better understand him. With this fuzziness about the conquest of Jerusalem, with this will to do not precisely identify the siege, the king tried to prove with the reliefs what he had suggested but not proven in the *Annals*, the victory on Jerusalem. The Assyrian king was successful in presenting his reinterpretation of battles happening in Judah not only with his subjects but also with us, with the last recipient of Assyrian propaganda. In choosing a special setting of the siege of a western city, he created the expectancy that let people think the city is Jerusalem (at least for a common middle urban Assyrian). Sennacherib suggested in texts and in images his totally winning on all Judah, but he did not clearly claim it. The absence of this claim is the only failure of his re-writing of historical events, the key to think he never won Jerusalem.³⁹

But, despite his claims and his essays to demonstrate the arriving or time of a pacified world through the domination on all regions, Assyrian propaganda seems to have not reached all the conquered people, as they are still terrified by the Assyrian soldiers and their destructions (see Bible⁴⁰). And it was not able to convince rebels who, sixty years later, destroyed Nineveh and defaced the royal person of Sennacherib, as they did also with Assurbanipal, as evidenced by the disfigured face of Sennacherib in the reliefs of room XXXVI. So, the reliefs of room XXXVI give the possibility also to have a look at a third kind of memory. Beside the memory of the vanquished (Judah people), and beside the memory of the conquerors (Assyrians), we can add the memory of an indirect recipient of the message of the past—considered in the Assyrian inscription—the memory of future generations among whom is our memory. We conserve the memory of a double violence, that of Sennacherib against Judah (“Lachish” relief) and that of the rebels against the king (Sennacherib’s head disfigured by rebels). And this is the most terrible, the condemnation for ever.

³⁹ On the failure of conquest of Jerusalem, see lastly: Aster and Faust (2018), Elayi (2018), Kalimi and Richardson (2014), Grabbe (2003).

⁴⁰ The memory of the Assyrians, and especially of their “cruelty”, is still very vivid when, two centuries later, the Bible starts to be written. This means that collective memory, even orally transmitted, has a strength which overcomes what it is generally admitted. This can explain why some historical traumas are long to pass.

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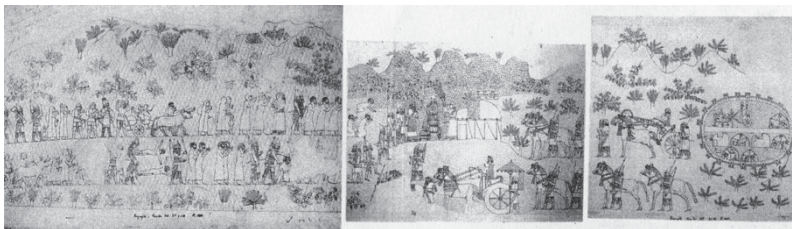


Figure 1. The so-called siege of Lachish (Barnett, Bleibtreu and Turner 1998, pl. 332)



Figure 2. Captions from Room XXXVI (Barnett, Bleibtreu and Turner 1998, pl. 343, detail)

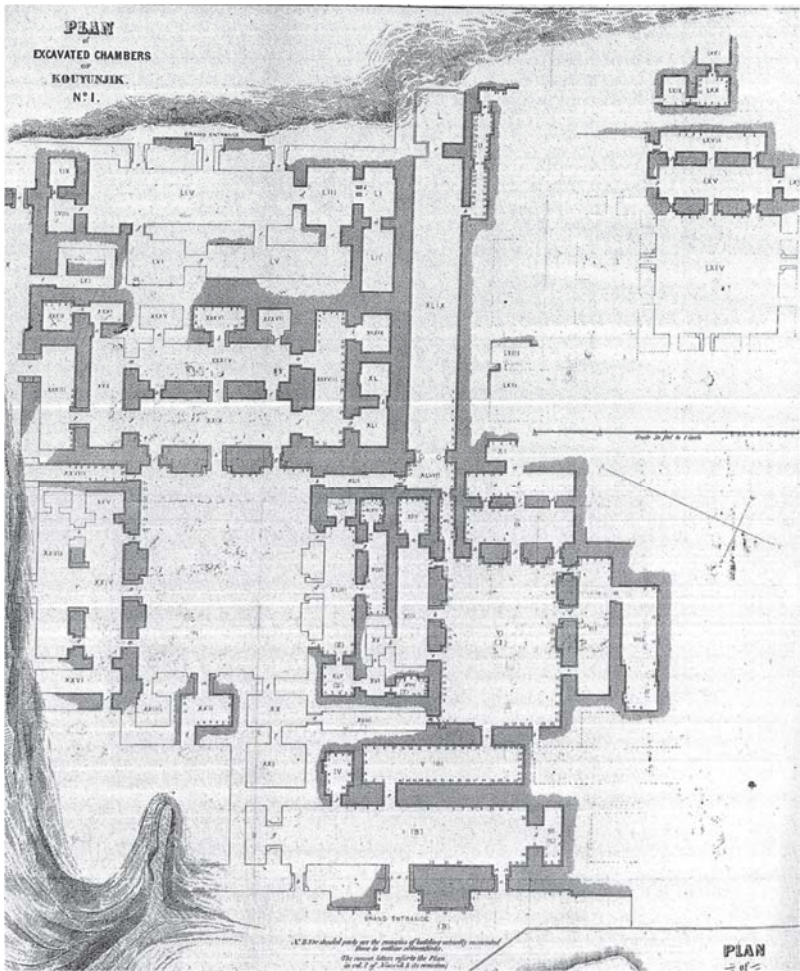


Figure 3. The palace of Nineveh (Layard 1853, plate between p. 66 and p. 67)

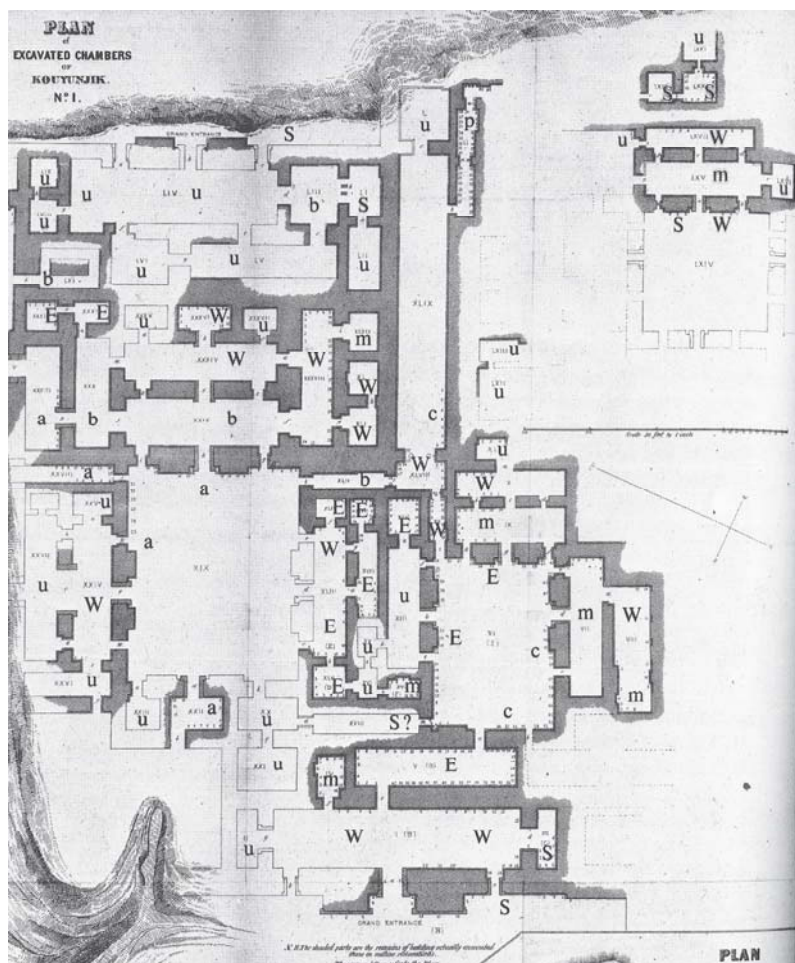


Figure 6. Localization of the reliefs belonging to different campaigns (Russell 1991: fig. 92)

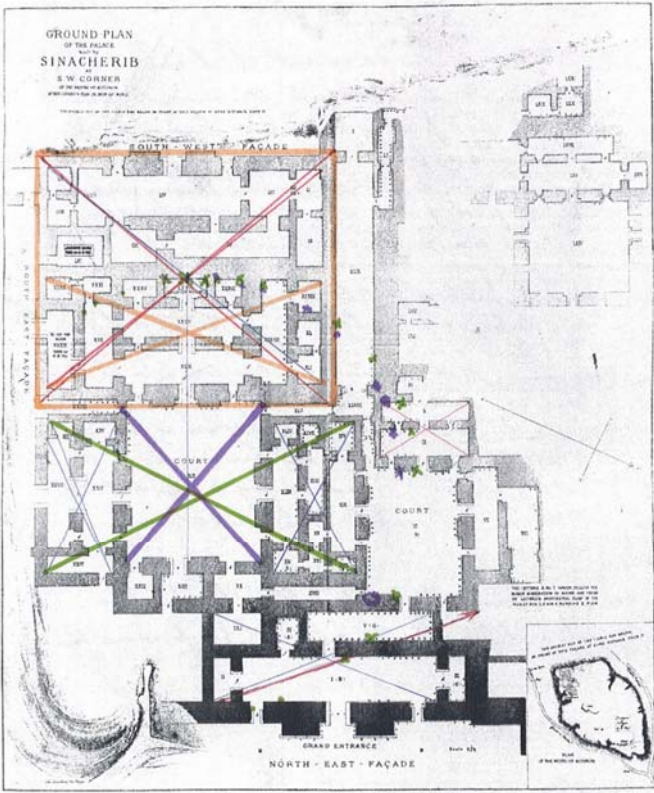


Figure 7. Scenography construction of rooms around court XIX (author's restitution)

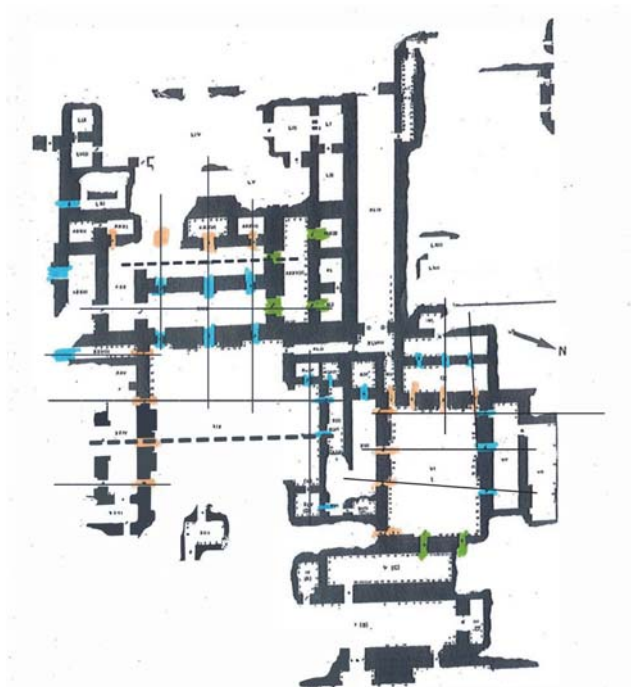


Figure 8. Symmetry of entries (author's restitution): in pink, 4 entries on the same side of the room; in blue, 3 entries on the same side of the room; in green, 2 entries on the same side of the room. Dark lines show the location of the entries of different rooms in the same axis. Dark hatched lines show the possible disposition of the entries of different rooms in the same axis.



Figure 9. Order, symmetry and movements in the construction of the palace rooms (author's restitution).

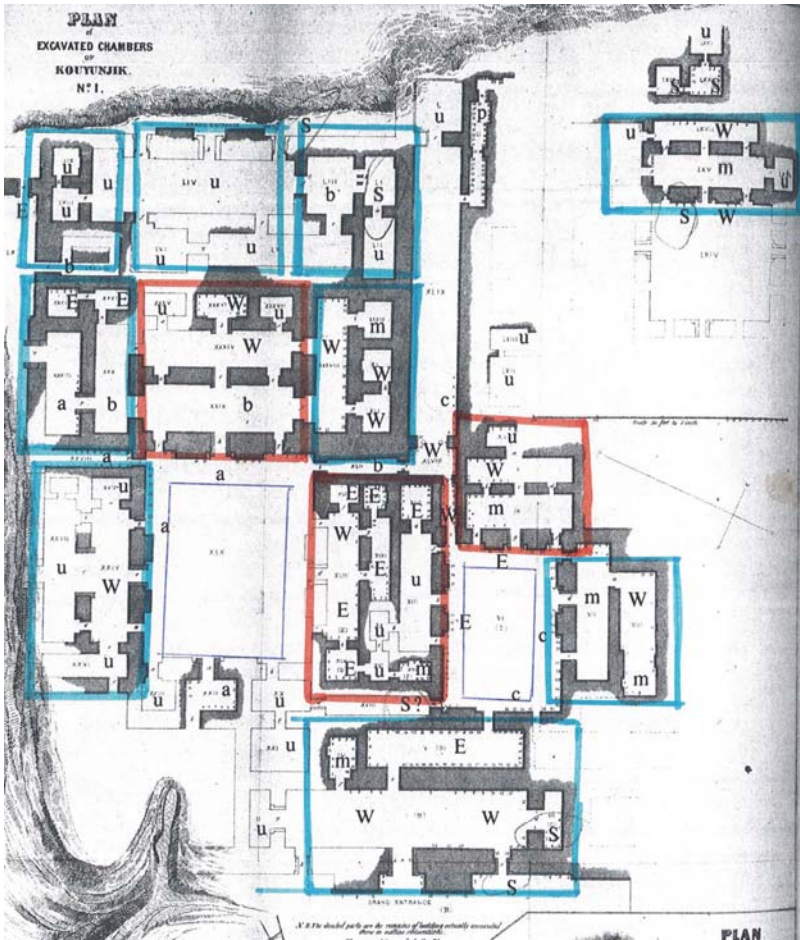


Figure 10. Fourteen geometrical units inside Sennacherib's palace (author's restitution)

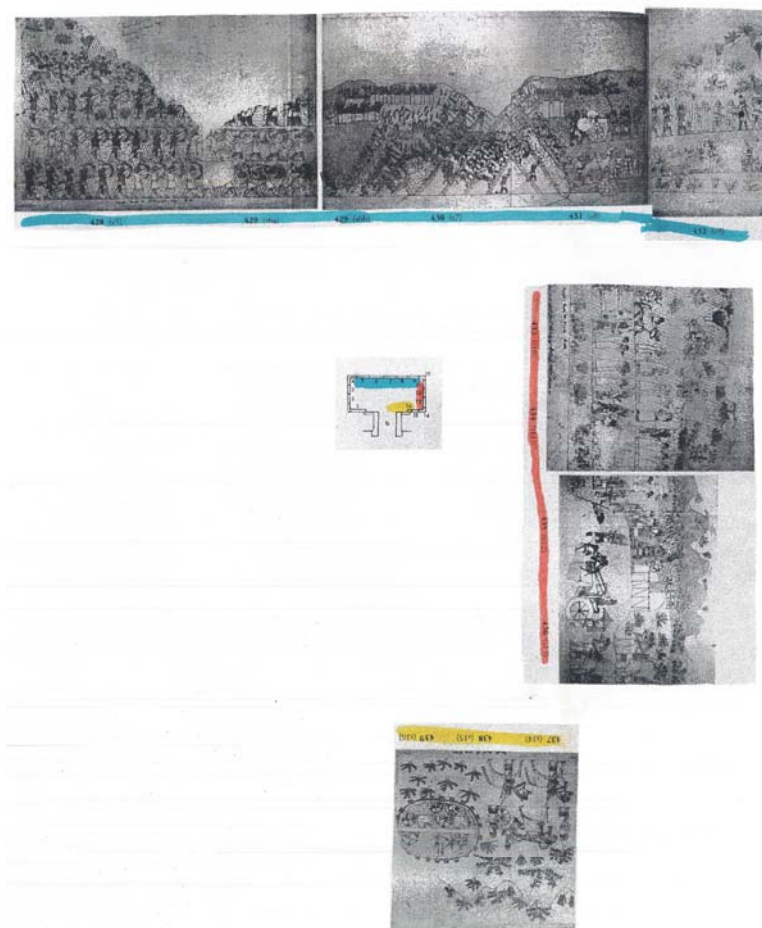


Figure 11. Disposition of the "Lachish" reliefs in room XXXVI (author's restitution; cf. Russell 1991: fig. 108).

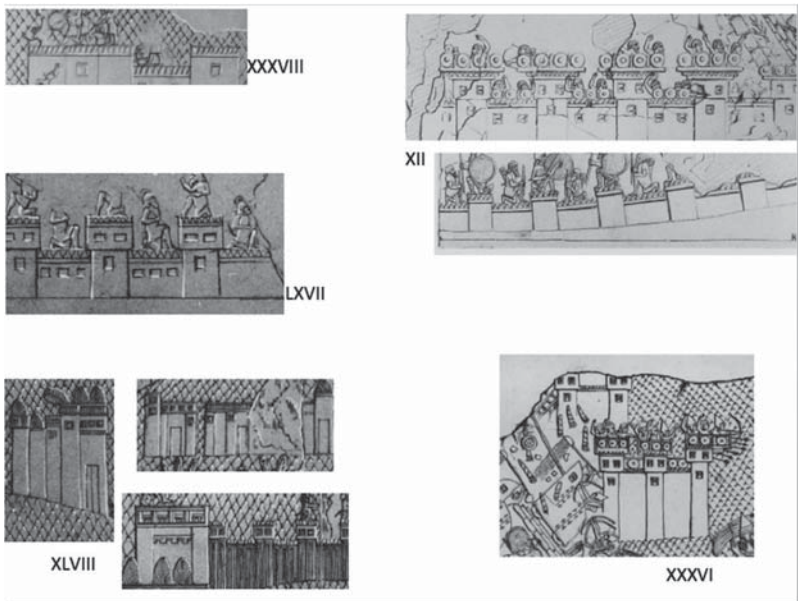


Figure 12. Examples of fortresses from different campaigns (author's composition)

Cultural Memory from Israel to Judah¹

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Résumé. Depuis que Jan Assmann a développé le concept de mémoire culturelle dans son ouvrage *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, il s'est révélé un outil pertinent pour affiner les études portant sur la mémoire collective dans les sociétés antiques d'Israël et de Juda. Cet article discute un cas particulier de transmission de mémoire culturelle : l'appropriation de traditions nord-israélites par des scribes judéens. Deux situations où nombre de chercheurs s'accordent pour dire qu'un tel transfert s'est produit sont étudiées : des oracles d'Osée, et les traditions sur l'Exode et les Patriarches. On indique aussi des cas analogues d'appropriation dans les cultures de Mésopotamie et de l'empire romain.

Keywords: collective memory, cultural memory, Israel, Judah

In his seminal study *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, Jan Assmann introduced the distinction between two forms of collective memory. *Communicative memory* “comprises memories related to the recent past. These are what the individual shares with his contemporaries.” By contrast, *cultural memory* focuses on figures of memory, whether events or narratives, situated in a remote past; “what counts for cultural memory is not factual but remembered

¹ This article is a revised version of a paper read during the workshop “Collective Memory as Capital in Ancient Levant,” organized by I. Koch and T. Römer on February 24th-26th, 2018 with the support of the “Fondation Hugo du Collège de France.” I thank the participants for their feedback.

history. One might even say that cultural memory transforms factual into remembered history, thus turning it into myth.”² Assmann himself analyzed the examples of Exodus and Deuteronomy,³ and since then this interest in cultural memory has proved relevant for understanding other texts of the Hebrew Bible.⁴ The present paper focuses on a peculiar and perhaps less studied aspect of collective memory in the Hebrew Bible: how the appropriation of Israelite traditions and memories in the Judean literary corpus reshaped Judah’s (and Yehud’s) collective memory. (In this article, for the sake of simplicity, I will use “Judah” as a shorthand for “Judah or Yehud.”)

It is widely acknowledged that the Hebrew Bible is a Judean product that integrates a substantial number of Israelite traditions. The traditions that *at least some scholars* regard as coming from Israel include the pre-Priestly story of Jacob (Gen 26-36*), the oldest kernel of Hosea and Amos, some old version of the Exodus narrative, the Elijah and Elisha narratives (to be found in 1 Kgs 17-2 Kgs 13), an old version of Deuteronomy, the Joseph story (Gen 37-50*),⁵

² J. Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012 [orig. German version 2007], p. 34-41 (36 and 37-38 for the quotations). In this article, I am using as a definition of the term “myth” the following characterization: “myth is foundational history that is narrated in order to illuminate the present from the standpoint of its origins” (ibid., p. 38).

³ Ibid., 179-81, 191-200. See also Römer, *La première histoire d’Israël : L’école deutéronomiste à l’œuvre*, Monde de la Bible 56, Genève, Labor et Fides, 2007, p. 134.

⁴ For instance, R. Hendel has underlined the role played by foundational myths such as the Abraham story or the Exodus narrative for Israelite and Judean cultural memory (*Remembering Abraham: Culture, Memory, and History in the Hebrew Bible*, London/New York, Oxford University Press, 2005). Similarly, in a recent study, H. G. M. Williamson has pointed out instances of both communicative and of cultural memory in some prophetic books (« History and Memory in the Prophets », in *The Oxford Handbook of the Prophets*, ed. C. J. Sharp, New York, Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 133-48).

⁵ The Joseph story is probably the most disputed item in this list; for a recent defense of the hypothesis of its Northern origins, see E. Blum, « The Joseph Story: Diaspora Novella or North-Israelite Narrative? », *ZAW* 129, 2017, p. 501-21.

royal annals, and some Psalms.⁶ The demise of the Northern kingdom, and especially the fall of Samaria ca. 720, may have led to a number of Israelites fleeing into Judah, prior to, during, or after the arrival of the Assyrian army. Granted, the hypothesis of a massive influx of Northerners in the late 8th century Judah is debated,⁷ but even the immigration of a very limited number of people bringing with them scrolls (and oral stories) would suffice to explain the importation of Israelite traditions. Alternatively, cultic sites like Bethel might have kept some scrolls that were brought into Judah at a later date. In addition, the role played by the religious authorities of Mount Gerizim in the formation of the Pentateuch has come to the fore in recent research and we may have to reckon with northern traditions preserved there.

I am interested here in the manner in which the Judean scribes took up such traditions and how this contributed to the recasting of their own cultural memory. After all, incorporating oracles addressed to another people in one's own corpus of literature is not a banal thing to do—especially in view of the fact that these oracles are essentially made up of criticism and threats. Even more striking is the possible integration of foundational myths, since they involve the very origins of a people and its identity.⁸ How did Judean redactors manage to blend Northern traditions into their own texts? How did it lead them to reshape their view of their own past? Did it impact the way they envisioned their own future? In this paper, I shall explore two different kinds of Northern traditions and memories that, according to most scholars, were taken up by Judean redactors and embedded in their own literary corpus:

⁶ For a detailed and very useful study of Israelite traditions taken up by Judean scribes, see D. Fleming, *The Legacy of Israel in Judah's Bible: History, Politics and the Reinscribing of Tradition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012.

⁷ I. Finkelstein and N. A. Silberman, « Temple and Dynasty: Hezekiah, the Re-making of Judah and the Rise of the Pan-Israelite Ideology », *JSOT* 30, 2006, p. 259-285. Against this hypothesis, and for a gradual growth of Judah, read N. Na'aman, « Dismissing the Myth of a Flood of Israelite Refugees in the Late Eighth Century B.C.E. », *ZAW* 126, 2014, p. 1-14.

⁸ In passing, the phenomenon of cultural appropriation is not limited to texts but encompasses other cultural horizons, including architecture: for a telling illustration, see V. Herrmann, « Appropriation and Emulation in the Earliest Sculptures from Zincirli (Iron Age Sam'al) », *American Journal of Archaeology* 121, 2017, p. 237-74.

the prophetic oracles attributed to Hosea and Amos (with a special focus on Hosea), on the one hand, and two foundational myths of origins, namely the Exodus and the Jacob story, on the other.

Obviously, there is no scholarly consensus in sight as to the date of most of the biblical redactions involved, especially when it comes to the Pentateuch. So when I discuss a given memory or story, I will not necessarily attempt to determine the earliest possible date at which it became part of Judahite traditions. On the contrary, I will focus on a *terminus ad quem* that most scholars would accept, so that we may agree that from that date on, this tradition was liable to influence and reshape Judah's cultural memory.⁹

1. The appropriation of Israelite prophetic traditions into Judah's cultural memory

Let us begin by noting why some oracles coming from the Northern Kingdom did not fall into oblivion but were appropriated and updated by Judean traders.

1.1. The "judeanization" of Israelite prophetic texts

The "judeanization" of Northern oracles, in other words their updating in order to serve Judean interests, is apparent in the book of

⁹ In addition, it would probably be naïve to believe that an entire country adopted one and the same cultural memory at the same time; strictly speaking, we should think of multiple traditions and memories favored by various groups and *milieus*. However, we lack the information to map such a variegated picture in the case of ancient Israel and Judah beyond basic distinctions like between Priestly and Deuteronomistic circles. While I will sometimes allude to this complexity, in the framework of this article, I will mainly limit my discussion to a broader description.

Hosea.¹⁰ Most striking are mentions of Judah interspersed in the oracles. Not that any such mention must necessarily be late: a reasonable case can be made that some of them in chapter 5 date from the time of the Syro-Ephraimite war or shortly after.¹¹ Yet others are likely to be secondary. Some of them draw a lesson relevant for the Judeans from a message first addressed to Israelites. This is the case in Hos 4:15-17, where verses 15 and 16 have been either entirely added or rewritten to make a plea to Judeans not to imitate Israelites:

Though you play the whore, O Israel, do not let Judah become guilty. Do not enter into Gilgal, or go up to Beth-aven, and do not swear, "As the LORD lives."

Like a stubborn heifer, Israel is stubborn; can the LORD now feed them like a lamb in a broad pasture?

*Ephraim is joined to idols -- let him alone.*¹²

Other additions introduce a contrast between Israel and Judah. Some of them underline a difference in their behavior. For instance, in 11:12, that is, at the end of an oracle concerning solely Israel, one finds a sentence that unexpectedly mentions Judah; its function is to point out that the latter is still faithful to God, in contrast to Israel:

Ephraim has surrounded me with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit;

but Judah still walks with God, and is faithful to the Holy One.

That the main motive of at least one Judean layer in Hosea is the hope that Judah will not meet the same fate as Israel, is apparent in a few verses. Thus 1:7, in the middle of a threatening message concerning the house of Israel, a scribe has added a promise to Judah:

¹⁰ See e.g. K. Schmid, *The Old Testament: A Literary History*, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2012, p. 89.

¹¹ A.A. Macintosh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Hosea*, ICC, Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1997, p. 202-213.

¹² Translations of the Hebrew Bible are from the NRSV.

[Gomer] conceived again and bore a daughter. Then the LORD said to him, “Name her Lo-ruhamah, for I will no longer have pity on the house of Israel or forgive them. *But I will have pity on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the LORD their God.* I will not save them by bow, or by sword, or by war, or by horses, or by horsemen.”

Interestingly, one also finds a possible allusion to Judah’s fall in the early 6th century in Hos 5:5¹³ (although one cannot entirely exclude the possibility that it is an earlier threat):¹⁴

Israel’s pride testifies against him;
Ephraim stumbles in his guilt;
Judah also stumbles with them.

Beyond these interpolations, the name “Israel” has sometimes been replaced by “Judah” in order to include the latter in a condemnation. This may be the case in 12:2:

The LORD has an indictment against *Judah*,
and will punish Jacob according to his ways,
and repay him according to his deeds.

Since the rest of the passage deals exclusively with Israel by way of an extended reference to the story of Jacob, regarded as Israel’s ancestor, the mention of Judah does not make any sense here except as an expedient to redirect the oracle to Judeans.

1.2. The appropriation by Judean scribes

What precedes is only a selection of a few examples, but the main point is clear: the “Judean stamp” is apparent in various parts of Hosea. To be sure, some exegetes regard several passages that mention Judah, such as Hos 1, as having first been entirely composed in

¹³ Schmid, *The Old Testament: A Literary History*, 89.

¹⁴ Macintosh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Hosea*, lxxi.

Judah or in Yehud.¹⁵ If so, what I mentioned above as additions should perhaps be understood as integral part of the passages from the start. Note, however, that even in this case, such mentions of Judah still appear in the middle or at the end of oracles overwhelmingly addressed to Israel on a formal level, and, at any rate, in a book connected to a Northern prophet, which I find highly significant with regards to cultural memory. At any rate, at least a number of the mentions of Judah, especially in what is regarded as the earliest kernel of the book (Hos 4-6*), were originally written in Israel. Besides, the process of appropriation may well have been staggered, each stage corresponding to a specific concern and involving a specific relationship vis-à-vis the cultural memory preserved until then. For the present purpose, it is not necessary to draw a detailed list of revisions spread over several centuries; it will suffice to distinguish between three basic situations.

First, some threats and warnings originally targeting Israelites in the 8th century were redirected towards Judeans in order for them to avoid the same fate as Israel by convincing the Judeans to act differently than their Northern counterparts. Today Hans Wolff's view that an early Judean redaction had to be connected "with the late phase of Hosea's activity, when he looked with hope towards certain circles in Judah,"¹⁶ looks somewhat romantic to many scholars, and Josiah's time appears to be a better candidate. If grounded in history, the tradition of Josiah taking control of northern territories (2 Kgs 23:15-19) would hint at a possible context for this reappropriation of Israelite traditions. Perhaps some Hosea scroll had been kept there until that time. However, the decisive factor is the literary relationship between Hosea and Amos on the one hand, and Judean compositions from the late 8th to early 7th century BCE, more precisely the direction of the literary

¹⁵ E.g. R. Vielhauer, « Hosea in the Book of the Twelve », in *Perspectives in the Formation of the Book of the Twelve*, ed. R. Albertz, J. Nogalski, and J. Wöhrle (BZAW 433; Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2012), 66-69.

¹⁶ H. W. Wolff, *Hosea, Hermeneia*; Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1974, p. xxxi.

dependence. If the earliest texts in Isaiah and Micah were influenced respectively by Amos and Hosea, as some scholars believe,¹⁷ then we have to reckon with an early reception of the latter books in Judah. If the direction is the other way around,¹⁸ then the “Josiah hypothesis” seems likely.

Secondly, some additions might reflect an awareness of Jerusalem’s fall and constitute a reflection on the similar fates met by Israel and Judah, as well as messages of hope. They include at least 5:5 and, in the opinion of many scholars, chapters 13 and 14. Thirdly, some changes occurred when book collections were created. It is conceivable that Amos and Hosea were transmitted together in the 7th century, and that each was revised in light of the other.¹⁹ Moreover, a plausible hypothesis stipulates that Amos and Hosea were collected together with Micah and Zephaniah to form a “Book of the Four” during the 6th century. It is probable then that the superscription, which lists Judean kings, was added or revised. This kind of superscription is characteristic of the four books among the Twelve. Furthermore, adjustments were probably made in Hosea when the Book of the Twelve was created in Yehud.²⁰

¹⁷ D. M. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 320, 327-331; cf. also Schmid, *The Old Testament: A Literary History*, p. 94.

¹⁸ J. Vermeylen, « Osée 1 et les prophètes du VIII^e siècle », in *Schriftauslegung in der Schrift: Festschrift für Odil Hannes Steck zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, ed. R. G. Kratz, T. Krüger and K. Schmid, Berlin/New York, de Gruyter, 2000, p. 193-206, esp. 201-202.

¹⁹ Jeremias, *Amos: A Commentary*, trans D.W. Stott, OTL; Louisville, John Knox, 1998, p. 7.

²⁰ See recently R. Vielhauer, « Hosea in the Book of the Twelve », 55-75. In passing, I have chosen Hosea as a case study, but similar remarks could be made for Amos, albeit perhaps in a more limited way. On the other hand, it appears to be easier in Amos than in Hosea to detect possible deuteronomistic additions, which represent another kind of Judean revision (Schmid, *The Old Testament: A Literary History*, p. 91) (he lists Am 1:1, 9-12; 2:4-5, 10-12; 3:1, 7; 5:25-26).

1.3. Appropriating a traumatic past

The multilayered appropriation just described resulted in important changes in Judah's collective memory. The earliest, northern kernel of the Hosea scroll certainly contained both communicative memory, such as allusions to recent events, for instance concerning the Syro-Ephraimite war, as well as cultural memory, such as references to Jacob, regarded as the national ancestor (more on this later).²¹ By taking up this complex of oracles, replete with memories of various sorts, and by embedding references to Judah into it, the Judean scribes extended Judah's own collective memory.

It is worth noting that most of what they appropriated was a deeply traumatic story. Recently, David Carr has stressed the role played by social reactions to traumatic events in the formation of the Bible, including the role played by what happened in Southern Levant in the late 8th century.²² Since the Assyrian army devastated most of Judah's territory and took a huge tribute before leaving Jerusalem, Israel's fate echoed Judean concerns in a dramatic way. In fact, Israel's fate certainly made a deep impression on Judean elites both before and after the siege of Jerusalem in 701. Prior to this event, the outcome of the Syro-Ephraimite war, notably the takeover of some Northern territories by the Assyrians, must have served as a dramatic illustration of what could happen. After 732, and even more clearly after 720, the obvious threat that a prophet could make consisted in announcing to Judeans that they

²¹ A. de Pury, « The Jacob Story and the Beginnings of the Formation of the Pentateuch », in *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation*, ed. T. B. Dozemand and K. Schmid, Atlanta, SBL, 2006, p. 51-72.

²² D. M. Carr, *Holy Resilience: The Bible's Traumatic Origins*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2014. Admittedly, some scholars doubt that we are in a position to assess the emotions and sentiments of people in Antiquity, since human sensitivity changes through time (I thank Omer Sergi for orally pointing this out to me). On the other hand, we do have some textual evidence, e.g. in the book of Lamentations that at least some Judeans were deeply affected by the fall of Jerusalem, and it isn't far-fetched to think that some kind of trauma was endured by Israelites when Samaria fell.

would meet the same fate as Israel's if they did not follow the instructions of the god or goddess that spoke through them. Obviously, the fact that Yhwh was worshipped both in Israel and in Judah, and that he had prophets in both countries, was key in this process. If Yhwh had treated Israel in some way, he could do the same with Judah.

But the Judean prophets or scribes did not just level the same kind of threats as Hosea: they also reused his oracles. They gave a second life to texts studded with allusions to recent events relevant to Israel's society, texts that carried along much trauma and distress, and they made them relevant to another people. The fact that Hosea's threats had been retrospectively vindicated by the fall of Samaria probably factored in this decision to "recycle" his oracles, and undoubtedly lent them some credibility. Yet even if we understand the rationale for their reuse in such a way, the striking fact remains that the Judean scribes imported the trauma of another nation into their own. With due caution, we may draw an interesting analogy by reflecting on the concept of *post-memory*, developed by Marianne Hirsch. It designates the fact that the children of parents who experienced a traumatic experience (such as the Shoah) sometimes relate to this experience as if it belonged directly to their own personal memory, even though they were born afterwards. The memory of the traumatic events was transmitted to the "generation after" and affects them so deeply that they "remember" the events as if they had lived them themselves.²³ Of course the situation of Judah inheriting Israel's trauma operates on another level and is not directly comparable, but the point is that in both cases we find a transmission of "extrinsic" traumatic memory.

After 701, the situation was different: Judah's territory had been devastated, but Jerusalem was spared. Hence a mixture of trauma in the countryside, and some relief in the capital. Various texts in biblical historiography and in Psalms indicate that the interruption of Jerusalem siege was interpreted as a divine deliverance. So the comparison with Samaria probably led to a peculiar "tale of

²³ See M. Hirsch's website: <https://www.postmemory.net/> (accessed 02/22/2018). Her most well-known book is *The Generation of Post-Memory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2012.

two cities”: Jerusalem had been miraculously spared the doom endured by Samaria.

1.4. Impact on the regime of historicity

The redirection of Northern oracles towards Judah and their influence on new oracles composed by Judean prophets resulted in new ways of remembering the past and envisioning the future. Broadly speaking, the present of the 7th century Judeans was “sandwiched” between the demise of the Northern Kingdom and a possible similar fate for the Southern Kingdom. By warning their contemporaries that they should expect a similar doom as that endured by the Israelites, depending on their behavior, Isaiah, Micah and Zephaniah (or the redactors who updated their works) assessed the present in light of the past and they envisioned a future that might resemble Israel’s end. It is not only the past that was semiotized but also the potential future, and the semiotization of this potential future was modeled on the semiotized past. Such an intricate relationship between past, present and future defines a peculiar *regime of historicity*, to borrow François Hartog’s concept.²⁴

Later on, when the kingdom of Judah came to be annexed by the Babylonians in the early 6th century, the Judeans entered yet another regime of historicity that involved two past events, the demises of the Northern and the Southern kingdoms, but also the hope for a return to the land²⁵ and for the future of the Davidic dynasty. This appears to be reflected in Isaiah 40-55 in various passages, but also in the exilic edition of Kings, since it contains an epilogue concerning the end of Israel (2 Kgs 17) but no equivalent for Judah, and on the contrary ends on a slightly positive note for the exiled king (2 Kgs 25: 27-30). Still later on, during the Persian period, a new situation arose after the return of some of the exiles and the reconstruction of the Jerusalem temple, hence yet another

²⁴ F. Hartog, *Régimes d’historicité: Présentisme et expérience du temps*, Paris, Seuil, 2012².

²⁵ Carr notes that this kind of hope is typical for displaced populations living in diaspora (*Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, p. 253).

regime of historicity. Scholars often ascribe to this period the addition of eschatological promises to the Hosea scroll.²⁶

1.5. The “israelization” of Judean traditions

Finally, I have highlighted the redirection of Israelite oracles towards Judah, but it is worth noting briefly that these northern oracles may also have influenced, perhaps even triggered, fresh oracles directly addressed to Judeans. Indeed, some scholars think that Isaiah and Micah drew some of their inspiration from Amos and Hosea. For instance, according to Konrad Schmid, Isaiah 5; 9-10 contains a web of allusions to Amos; he concludes that “for the early book of Isaiah the threat of judgment against Judah is not a new oracle of judgment by God but an extension of the judgment originally imposed on the Northern Kingdom.”²⁷ Similarly, David Carr notes that Micah 1:2-7 “can be seen as an eighth-century re-application to Judah of past prophecies to the North.” In his view, we may understand “Isaiah and Micah as parallel interpretations of the crises facing late-eighth-century Judah *as seen through the lens of written prophecies from the North*.”²⁸ In short, the judeanization of Israelite oracles was accompanied by some sort of “israelization” of Judean prophecies.

1.6. Analogies

To close this section, let me note that there are analogies to this process of appropriation of a foreign text and its reorientation. In the Hebrew Bible, there is the reuse and adaptation of Amenemope sayings in Proverbs 22:17-23:14. Here the sayings are reoriented

²⁶ For an overview of Hosea’s redaction, see T. Römer, « Osée », in *Introduction à l’Ancien Testament*, p. 469-475.

²⁷ Schmid, *The Old Testament: A Literary History*, p. 94. See also Carr, *Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, p. 327-328.

²⁸ Carr, *Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, p. 330 (emphasis in original).

from the Egyptians to the Judeans, and the name of Yhwh is substituted to Thoth.²⁹

There are also analogies of this phenomenon of appropriation and reorientation at several junctures in the history of Mesopotamian literature. Thus, it is well known that sometime after the fall of the third dynasty of Ur, Old Babylonian scribes copied and adapted many works of Sumerian literature. Later, it was the turn of Assyrian scribes to appropriate Babylonian texts:

Traditional cuneiform texts associated with the Middle Assyrian royal court and dated in the early 12th century BCE, emphasize the true Babylonian origin of their contents. In the absence of an Assyrian literary heritage proper, Assyrian scribes adopted Babylonian scholarship and made it their own. This strategy was so successful that even today the study of the Babylonian written heritage is called Assyriology. Ninurta-ubalissu, the royal scribe, went even further in trying to anchor the written tradition in geography by linking it to the ancient Babylonian city of Nippur, home to the god Enlil and his son Ninurta. Ninurta-ubalissu exploited the identification of the gods Assur and Enlil in order to appropriate Nippur traditions as being essentially Assyrian.³⁰

2. Israelite foundational myths and Judah's cultural memory

Let us now turn to another series of traditions and memories that may have passed from Israel to Judah and, if so, must have significantly impacted the latter's cultural memory.

²⁹ Cf. M. V. Fox, « From Amenemope to Proverbs », *ZAW* 126, 2014, p. 76-91, esp. p. 88-89 (Amenemope 7.19 reused in Prov 22:23).

³⁰ N. Veldhuis, « Domesticizing Babylonian Scribal Culture in Assyria: Transformation by Preservation », in *Theory and Practice of Knowledge Transfer*, ed. W. S. van Egmond and W. H. van Soldt, Leiden, Nederlands Instituut Voor Het Nabije Oosten, 2012, p. 11.

2.1. The Exodus and the Jacob story in Israel's cultural memory

At least two foundational myths apparently played a role in the Northern kingdom during the 8th century (and possibly earlier): the Exodus and Jacob's story. This conclusion rests mainly on two kinds of evidence. First, there are numerous parallels between the Exodus narrative and the account of the beginnings of the Northern kingdom in 1 Kgs 12.³¹ It is common today to regard the Exodus as a "charter myth" for the Northern Kingdom.³² Moreover, the geographical setting, or better, to use Assmann's vocabulary,³³ the *mnemotope* of the Jacob story is firmly anchored in the territories of the Northern kingdom. Furthermore, at least some³⁴ of the references to the Exodus and to Jacob in Hosea (and perhaps Amos) are plausibly dated to the 8th century. With Albert de Pury, I think that Hos 12 alludes to some earlier Jacob story; this is precisely why

³¹ Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, 477. In particular, the account of the beginnings of the Northern kingdom in 1 Kgs 12 seems to indicate that Israelites worshipped Yhwh as the God of the Exodus in the temples of Dan and Bethel. This connection clearly underlies the Judean polemical account that puts into Jeroboam I's mouth an identification of the golden calves with "the gods who brought you up out of the land of Egypt" (1 Kgs 12:28). Perhaps originally the text had "God" and the plural is a later polemical correction. On this and the Northern connection of 1 Kgs 12, see T. Römer, *Moïse en version originale : Enquête sur le récit de la sortie d'Égypte (Exode 1-15)*, Paris/Genève, Bayard/Labor et Fides, 2015, p. 23-27. Some scholars think that Jeroboam I is a fictional, back projection of Jeroboam II, or that the account of the former has been colored by features actually pertaining to the latter, but that would not change my point since it would still fit an 8th century setting. The same connection between the golden calf and the god of the Exodus appears in Exod 32 with identical words (Exod 32:4). The etiologies concerning the sanctuary of Bethel (Gen 28) suggests that some Jacob stories may have been preserved there.

³² See the nuanced discussion in N. Na'aman, « Out of Egypt or Out of Canaan? The Exodus Story Between Memory and Historical Reality », in *Israel's Exodus in Transdisciplinary Perspective*, ed. T. E. Levy et al., New York, Springer, 2015, p. 530.

³³ Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, p. 44-45.

³⁴ Some scholars believe that all these references betray an awareness of later Pentateuchal sources and were not part of the earliest kernel of Hosea, but I find it unlikely. At least some of the verses referring to Exodus, notably in Hos 4-9*, must have been present in the earliest Hosea scroll.

v. 2-12 contain some obscure allusions and blind motives. Furthermore, Hos 12:9-13 draws a comparison between the two figures associated with these myths of origins, that is, Moses and Jacob, with a clear preference given to the former. With de Pury, I conclude that both myths were already known in Israel in the 8th century.³⁵

In such circumstances, it is plausible that some versions of the Exodus narrative and the Jacob story were imported from Israel into Judah sometime after the fall of Samaria. The main question is whether the Judeans already had their own traditions about the same topics or whether these stories were entirely new to them: the impact on their cultural memory would not be the same.

2.2. The Exodus and Judah's cultural memory

Regarding the Exodus, various scholars have hypothesized that the cultural memory of a bondage *in* Egypt might stem from an experience of bondage *to* Egypt *in* Canaan during the Late Bronze Age or Iron Age I. In local cultural memory, the withdrawal of Egypt from Canaan in the 12th century was, according to this theory, narratively transformed into a liberation from Egyptian slavery in Egypt. According to Ronald Hendel,³⁶ this does not exclude the possibility that the experience of some Canaanites slaves having fled from Egypt to Canaan played a role in the constitution of the cultural memory of the Exodus. On the contrary, their own memories might have been joined to the memories of natives previously subjected to Egyptian rule, and maybe these former slaves' memories provided the "allochthonous ingredient" that helped all this to be

³⁵ A. de Pury, « The Jacob Story and the Beginnings of the Formation of the Pentateuch ». Note that according to another hypothesis, the Moses story was not connected to the Exodus narrative yet, since poetic references to the Exodus do not mention Moses (Römer, *Moïse en version originale*, p. 33-34).

³⁶ R. Hendel, « The Exodus as Cultural Memory: Egyptian Bondage and the Song of the Sea », in *Israel's Exodus in Transdisciplinary Perspective*, ed. T. E. Levy et al., p. 65-77.

subsumed under the history of an escape from Egypt.³⁷ Scholars generally think that it is the central hill country, that is, the territory of the future Northern Kingdom, that was the most affected by the Egyptian rule. Since the settlement of the hill country of Judah essentially took place later, Na'aman argues that this peripheral region probably did not preserve a memory of the Egyptian rule and withdrawal. In his view, it might be only in the late 8th century, after the fall of Samaria, that this cultural memory was transferred into Judah.³⁸

In this scenario, the appropriation of the Exodus myth must have led to a powerful recasting of Judah's cultural memory, at least in the circles who accepted it. For them, Yhwh was now regarded as the God who had delivered the ancestors of the Judeans from the Egyptian bondage: this was an important addition to his *résumé*. To use Assmann's categories, the Exodus became a *foundational* myth with regard to the theology of Yhwh worshippers, since it reconfigured the way they thought of the origins of their relationship with Yhwh. But it also became a *mythomotor* for them: the presence, in their remembered past, of such a story of divine deliverance gave an impetus to their hopes. Moreover, in the context of Assyrian vassalage, the Exodus probably served as a *contrapresent* myth: the ancestors had been liberated from a foreign bondage, while the descendants were subjected to an imperialist rule and all its practical consequences. It was a story to which the Judeans could relate, and that might help them envisage a different future.

That said, it is not possible to be categorical with regard to the list of ethnic groups whose cultural memory included the Exodus myth during the early Iron Age, and perhaps we should not exclude

³⁷ Perhaps also some other "traces of memory" were incorporated in what finally resulted in a common narrative and a collective memory (Römer, *Moïse en version originale*, p. 27-34).

³⁸ Na'aman concludes: "It is thus inconceivable that the tradition [of the Exodus] was unknown in the Kingdom of Judah before the seventh century BCE and suddenly played such an important role in the consciousness of the Late First Temple period's ruler and elite. We should better assume that the Exodus tradition was known in both kingdoms but occupied a more important role in the historical memory of the Northern Kingdom" (« Out of Egypt or Out of Canaan? », p. 528).

Judah too fast.³⁹ Besides, some scholars still believe that some Northern and Southern territories belonged to a same polity during a limited window of time in the 10th century. If so, traditions and memories might have been shared. Of course, such a United Monarchy, even in a low-key version deprived of the biblical hyperboles, looks old-fashioned today and is ruled out categorically by many scholars. But some competent historians⁴⁰ and archaeologists⁴¹ still consider that it may contain a kernel of historical truth.⁴² Interestingly, according to N. Na'aman and O. Sergi, Judah controlled the Benjamin Plateau (between Bethel and Jerusalem) already in the 10th century.⁴³ Whatever the case, if Judah already

³⁹ We cannot determine precisely how the Egyptian rule in the Southern Levant impacted the hill country of Judah, however sparse its settlement was, and however peripheral it was. And even if this impact was minimal, we cannot rule out the possibility that the Exodus myth diffused into this region. Nor can we exclude the possibility that some Judeans were taken into Egypt as labor force and escaped to come back home.

⁴⁰ A. Lemaire, « The United Monarchy: Saul, David and Solomon », in *Ancient Israel: From Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple*, ed. H. Shanks, Washington, Biblical Archaeology Society, 2013, p. 85-128.

⁴¹ A. Mazar, « Archaeology and the Biblical Narrative: The Case of the United Monarchy », in *One God – One Cult – One Nation. Archaeological and Biblical Perspectives*, ed. R.G. Kratz and H. Spieckermann, Berlin/New York, de Gruyter, 2010, p. 29-58; W. G. Dever, *Beyond the Texts: An Archaeological Portrait of Israel and Judah*, Atlanta, SBL Press, 2017, p. 259-390; A. Faust, « An All-Israelite Identity: Historical Reality or Biblical Myth? », in *The Wide Lens in Archaeology: Honoring Brian Hesse's Contributions to Anthropological Archaeology*, ed. J. Lev-Tov, P. Wapnish, and A. Gilbert, Atlanta, Lockwood Press, 2017, p. 169-190.

⁴² None of these possibilities necessitates that an Exodus account was already put into writing in the 10th or 9th century, although I think it was materially possible: M. Richelle, « Elusive Scrolls: Could Any Hebrew Literature Be Written Prior to the Eighth Century B.C.E.? », *VT* 66, 2016, p. 556-594. Frank Polak has convincingly shown that a great part of the Exodus narrative is characterized by a linguistic register that “preserves an underlying oral-epic substratum,” so we probably have to reckon with a period of oral transmission (« Storytelling and Redaction – Varieties of Language Usage in the Exodus Narrative », in *The Formation of the Pentateuch: Bridging the Academic Cultures of Europe, Israel, and North America*, ed. J. C. Gertz, B. M. Levinson, D. Rom-Shiloni, and K. Schmid, FAT 111, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2016, p. 443-475, esp. 443).

⁴³ N. Na'aman, « Saul, Benjamin, and the Emergence of “Biblical Israel” », *ZAW* 121, 2009, p. 211-224, p. 335-349; O. Sergi, « The Emergence of Judah as Political Entity Between Jerusalem and Benjamin », *ZDPV* 133, 2017, p. 1-23.

had an Exodus story prior to 720, the appropriation of the Northern version of this myth had a less important impact on Judah's cultural memory than in the former scenario. It must have been significant nonetheless, since it certainly involved the addition of new episodes and traditions that were then merged with the Judean version.

2.3. The linkage between Abraham and the Exodus in Judah's cultural memory

According to a wide scholarly consensus, the Abraham cycle constitutes a myth that was originally distinct from the Exodus story. However, the scope of the traditions about Abraham known to the Judeans in the monarchic period is debated. Recently, Thomas Römer (along with Oded Lipschits and Hervé Gonzalez) identified pre-Priestly narratives in the Abraham traditions (Gen 13*; 18-19*) and dated their first literary form to the 7th century.⁴⁴ In view of Frank Polak's conclusions regarding an oral substratum behind these narratives,⁴⁵ I think that this would allow for an oral prehistory at least in the 8th century.⁴⁶ My point is that it is reasonable to think that some Judeans already had their own local myth, centered on the figure of Abraham, when a North-Israelite version of the Exodus story reached them. That said, T. Römer has also argued out that, contrary to former widespread opinion, "Abraham was a figure remembered in the south of Judah, but not as the patriarch

⁴⁴ O. Lipschits, T. Römer, H. Gonzalez, « The Pre-priestly Abraham Narratives from Monarchic to Persian Times », *Semitica* 59, 2017, p. 295.

⁴⁵ F. Polak, « Oral Platform and Language Usage in the Abraham Narrative », in *The Formation of the Pentateuch*, p. 405-441.

⁴⁶ Maybe the Judeans had some Isaac stories too, although there are few traces of them in the extant texts. Erhard Blum thinks that "the figure of Isaac was of peculiar significance for the northerners, at least in the later eighth century BCE", because in Amos Israel is named "Isaac" (7:9) and "the house of Isaac" (7:16), and he is warned not to go to Beersheba (5:5) (« The Jacob Tradition », in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, ed. C. A. Evans, J. N. Lohr, D. L. Petersen, VTSup 152, Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2012, p. 209). But could not these intriguing references be late Judeans updates? Everything in the Isaac narratives hints at a southern setting.

of the kingdom of Judah.” The Abraham stories are anchored in the south of Judah, not in Jerusalem, and “he is not the ancestor of the different tribes of clans that form Judah,” but “an autochthon figure of several tribes and groups that settle in the area of Hebron.”⁴⁷ Accordingly, there was no real symmetry between Jacob in Israel and Abraham in Judah. Nevertheless, I note that Abraham came to be regarded as a reference figure on a wider scale during the Neo-Babylonian period at the latest, since he serves as a figure of legitimation of the people that remained in the land during the Exile, as is evident in some polemics reflected in Ezekiel (Ezek 33:23-24).

For our purposes, the main question is when the Exodus narrative and the Abraham stories were joined at the latest, as well as how this impacted Judah’s cultural memory. The prevailing opinion among scholars seems to be that P was the first to link them,⁴⁸ although some still defend the view that it was J⁴⁹ or some other pre-Priestly redactor.⁵⁰ From a linguistic point of view, the relevant texts are written in Classical Biblical Hebrew, which was used during the royal period and until about the middle of the 6th century.⁵¹ The Neo-Babylonian period may be regarded as a probable *terminus ad quem*.⁵² Now, how was the Exodus connected to the Abraham stories and received in Judah’s cultural memory?

⁴⁷ Lipschits, Römer, Gonzalez, « The Pre-priestly Abraham Narratives », p. 275, p. 290.

⁴⁸ E.g. K. Schmid, « The So-Called Yahwist and the Literary Gap Between Genesis and Exodus », in *A Farewell to the Yahwist?* p. 29-50, esp. p. 35-47; E. Blum, « The Literary Connection Between the Books of Genesis and Exodus and the End of the Book of Joshua », in *ibid.*, p. 89-106.

⁴⁹ C. Levin, « The Yahwist and the Redactional Link Between Genesis and Exodus », in *A Farewell to the Yahwist?*, p. 131-141; J. van Seters, « The Report of the Yahwist’s Demise Has Been Greatly Exaggerated! », in *ibid.*, p. 143-157. Note, however, that these authors have quite different views on J.

⁵⁰ T. B. Dozeman, « The Commission of Moses and the Book of Genesis », in *A Farewell to the Yahwist?*, p. 107-129.

⁵¹ J. Joosten, « Diachronic Linguistics and the Date of the Pentateuch », in *The Formation of the Pentateuch*, ed. J. C. Gertz et al., Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2016, p. 327-344.

⁵² For those, like Blum, who think that P is responsible for the junction and date it to the Exile, this is evident.

Recent research seems to point in two opposite directions. On the one hand, according to T. Römer, the formation of the Pre-Priestly Abraham tradition included a layer (Gen 12:10-20; 16*) that contains a discreet polemic against the “Deuteronomic” Exodus tradition. Indeed, in Gen 12 the encounter between Abraham and the Pharaoh is modeled on the encounter between Moses and the Pharaoh, except that the king of Egypt appears in favorable light and respects God. In addition, Gen 16 echoes the story of the oppression of the Hebrews in Egypt but reverses the roles, since it is the Hebrew mistress, Sarah, who oppresses the Egyptian servant, Hagar. Accordingly, “both narratives adapt the Exodus tradition in a ‘counter history’.”⁵³ If so, the Exodus theology met some Judean resistance and prompted an extension of the Abraham narrative with a “countermemory,” that is, “a deliberate recasting of memories of the past” in order to “refute, revise, and replace a previously compelling or accepted memory of the past”.⁵⁴

At the same time, this implies that the redactors behind these narratives felt compelled to respond to the “dtr” Exodus theology, which is an indirect testimony to the importance of the latter as an accepted memory of the past. Moreover, Gen 12:10-20 and 16* cast a bad light on Abraham and it is puzzling that the price for reacting to the Exodus theology would have been to criticize the figure that served as a rival myth. Also, “the fact that Genesis 12:10-20 was put before Genesis 13 may be understood as a message that Abraham should not live in Egypt but in the land that Yhwh did promise to him”.⁵⁵ This seems to reflect some degree of agreement with the Exodus logic. All in all, one of the effects of these stories is to assimilate the Exodus by embedding it in Abraham’s biography.

Besides, an important feature of this linkage in terms of cultural memory is the presence of an overarching and positive theme: the promise to the ancestors. In the Neo-Babylonian period at the latest (some would say in the Persian period), the Judeans were in possession of a combination of ancestral and Exodus narratives

⁵³ Lipschits, Römer, Gonzalez, « The Pre-priestly Abraham Narratives », p. 292.

⁵⁴ Hendel, *Remembering Abraham*, p. 41.

⁵⁵ Lipschits, Römer, Gonzalez, « The Pre-priestly Abraham Narratives », p. 293.

that served as a mythomotor particularly fitted to help them live through the trials of the times. Many scholars have already highlighted the relevance of the Abraham story and of the Exodus for the Exiles and later for the returnees. The travel made by Abraham, the “national” ancestor, from Babylonia to Canaan, served as an archetype for them.⁵⁶ Similarly, the narrative of the liberation of Egyptian bondage served to model the return from Babylonia as a New Exodus, as is evident in Isaiah 40-55. As already noted, references to Abraham in Isaiah and Ezekiel also show that this patriarchal figure served as a foundational myth for the people who remained in the land during the Exile.

Be that as it may, it is worth noting that the Exodus does not seem to have been judged a relevant reference in any context and/or by every redactor during the Persian period / early Hellenistic period. While Ezra-Nehemiah seems to draw on this tradition in order to present the return of the Exiles as a Second Exodus,⁵⁷ Chronicles seems to avoid such references and focuses on an autochthonous model.⁵⁸

2.4. The integration of Jacob in Judah’s cultural memory

At first, the Jacob story seems less promising than the Exodus myth for the Judean interests. After all, this story is mainly anchored in the Northern mnemotope and involves an ambivalent figure; it is difficult to see how the Judeans could relate to him and his “biography.” In fact, Albert de Pury believes that the Deuteronomistic tradition discredits Jacob, who is not named (*damnatio memoriae*!) but alluded to as an “Aramean wanderer” in Deut 26:5. The Jacob story really became part of the Judeans’s cultural memory only

⁵⁶ Liverani, p. 354.

⁵⁷ See K. Koch, « Ezra and the Origins of Judaism », *JSS* 19, 1974, p. 184-189, although part of the evidence is now read differently by M.D. Knowles, « Pilgrimage Imagery in the Returns in Ezra », *JBL* 123, 2004, p. 57-74.

⁵⁸ See P. Abadie, « Comment entendre le livre des Chroniques ? Une histoire écrite sous la forme d’un plaidoyer des lévites au temple de Jérusalem », *SemClas* 11, 2018, p. 179-188. I would note a possible exception: in 1 Chron 20.

when Jacob was integrated in their family tree. Even then, according to de Pury, this was done by P but leaving aside all the negative old Jacob cycle, which was only incorporated in the storyline later.⁵⁹ At any rate, for the Jacob story to be relevant to the Judean mnemohistory, more was needed than a simple antiquarian interest. Recent research suggest that various dynamics were at play.

David Carr certainly reflects a wide current consensus in stating that the Judeans appropriated the Jacob story by *subordinating* it to their pre-existing storyline. He writes that “certain parts of the Jacob story narrative appear to be secondary adaptations of it to Southern interests,” such as “a series of additions to the Jacob story that prepare for the proclamation later in Genesis of the disqualification of Jacob’s older sons—Reuben, Simeon, and Levi—from being his heirs and the resulting promotion of Judah to eternal rule (Gen 49:3-12).”⁶⁰ Accordingly, the Jacob narrative, that is, one of Israel’s foundational myths, became in the hands of Southern scribes a *foundational myth* for Judah, in fact a *teleological* story in which Judah’s rule was regarded as the *telos* of an ancestral blessing or prediction. After all, Jacob was Abraham’s grandson, not the other way around; Abraham was the ancestor’s ancestor, the first to receive God’s promise. That said, there are various ways of explaining the connection between Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. To mention but one dissenting view, let me quote Daniel Fleming:

the roles of Isaac and Abraham in the Jacob cycle need not be removed automatically as reflections of the combined Abraham-Isaac-Jacob narrative in something close to our current book of Genesis, from a Judahite and postmonarchic setting. It is possible that Abraham and Isaac are first of all Jacob’s antecedents, and their interest lies in how they relate Jacob to the peoples of Aram and Edom. If these had a place in Israelite thought, they would indicate that the genealogical approach to identity could explain relationships beyond the immediate family of associated tribal peoples. The multigenerational scheme of Israel’s ancestry may therefore be more than a literary

⁵⁹ De Pury, « The Jacob Story and the Beginnings of the Formation of the Pentateuch », p. 72.

⁶⁰ Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, p. 473.

construct designed to piece together characters and storied from completely isolated origins.⁶¹

Whatever the case, it is not that the Judeans identified themselves with Abraham in a straightforward manner: Judah is one of *Jacob's* sons. There are signs that the Judeans, in time, related to Jacob: notably, Jacob is unabashedly identified with Judah in Obadiah. The family tree subordinates Jacob to Abraham, but the system of Jacob's twelve sons is remarkably integrative of northern and southern tribes. In addition, Abraham appears as an "ecumenical" father, an umbrella-figure whose multifold offspring spreads over various groups and territories, reflecting a peaceful cooperation. Overall, the Patriarchal stories in Gen 12-36 were able to accommodate the interests of several groups, especially during the Persian period: returnees and natives, northerners and southerners, people worshipping in Jerusalem or not.⁶²

What is certain is that the inclusion of the Jacob stories in the Judean storyline entails dimensions of subordination and integration. However one understands the process leading to this state of affairs, the result is a mixture of cultural memories that the Judeans regarded as their own remembered past.

2.5. A literary analogy

In closing, I would like to note that there exists an analogy to this linkage of foundational myths in Latin literature. Probably the most well-known of such Roman legends are, on the one hand, the story of Romulus and Remus, and, on the other, the story of Aeneas. Both were subjected to many variations during their manifold transmission, but their basic plots are quite clear. Romulus and Remus were two brothers who founded Rome in 753 BCE. This is an "autochthonous" myth of origins. As for Aeneas, believed to be the

⁶¹ Fleming, *The Legacy of Israel*, p. 85.

⁶² This is why some scholars think that these features of the texts result from a collaboration between religious authorities from Jerusalem and Mount Gerizim, and also between leaders from Jerusalem and Hebron (Lipschits, Römer, Gonzalez, « The Pre-priestly Abraham Narratives », p. 295-296).

founder of Rome, he fled from the city of Troy at the end of the war between Greeks and Trojans. In other words, this myth makes the Romans the descendants of a “foreigner,” a Trojan hero. From the 3rd century BCE on, Roman literati attempted to connect both myths of origins, and the solution (as found in its classical version in Livy) was to link the founders by a dynasty. In Mary Beard’s vivid words:

Aeneas became seen as the founder not of Rome but of Lavinium; his son Ascanius was said to have founded Alba Longa—the city from which Romulus and Remus were later cast out before they founded Rome; and a shadowy and, even by Roman standards, flagrantly fictional dynasty of Alban kings was constructed to bridge the gap between Ascanius and the magic date of 753 BCE.⁶³

The linkage between Aeneas and Romulus by way of a dynastical succession parallels the linkage between Abraham and Jacob by way of a genealogical succession (Isaac representing the intermediary generation).⁶⁴ It also parallels the linkage between the Patriarchs on the one hand, Moses and the Exodus on the other, with a chronological gap of 430 years according to Exod 12:40. The recasting of Rome’s cultural memory is interesting for a further reason: seen from another angle, the Roman amalgamated story combines a myth of *allochthonous* origins (Aeneas escaping from Troy) and a myth of *autochthonous* origins (Romulus and Remus being indigenous). All other things being equal, this parallels the linkage of Exodus and the Patriarchal stories in the Pentateuch. Furthermore, as Aeneas now appears as a unifying figure, ancestor to both Greeks and Romans, so, similarly, Abraham was regarded as the ancestor of several peoples.

⁶³ M. Beard, *SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome*, London: Profile Books, 2016, p. 77. See Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman History* 1.53-71, 2.2; Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.272; 6.756; Livy, *Roman History* 1.1-2.

⁶⁴ M. Weinfeld already noted this parallel between the biblical and the Roman story, but only to note that there is a chronological gap between the remote ancestor and the “national” ancestor, a gap that the Chronicler tried to fill by way of a ten-generation genealogy between Ephraim and Joshua (1 Chron 7:25-27) (*The Promise of the Land: The Inheritance of the Land of Canaan by the Israelites*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, p. 4-7).

In sum, the analysis of Roman legends shows that the linkage of foundational myths might involve two distinct ancestors (Aeneas and Romulus; cp. Abraham and Jacob) or an allochthonous origin and an autochthonous one (Troy and Rome; cp. Egypt and Canaan). This is not to say that the connection between those biblical traditions is necessarily the result of the same kind of process as for the Roman myths, but the similarities are worth noting.

Conclusion

The concept of cultural memory has already proved a useful tool to analyze the ways in which Israel and Judah shaped their remembered past in previous studies. This paper has addressed an aspect of Judah's mnemohistory that may have been less studied: how the appropriation of some of the Northern Kingdom's traditions and memories by Judean redactors led to a recasting of Judah's (and Yehud's) own cultural memory. I have explored two different kinds of Northern traditions and memories that Judean redactors may have embedded in their own literary corpus: the prophetic oracles attributed to Hosea and Amos (with a special focus on Hosea), on the one hand, and two foundational myths of origins, namely a Northern version of the Exodus and the Jacob story, on the other. I have pointed out two difficulties in dealing with this subject. First, there will always be divergences among scholars about the dates of the relevant texts, and therefore about the time when Northern traditions reached the Judean scribes. Second, it is not always possible to be sure that a tradition was entirely new to the members of a society when some foreign version of it reached them: for instance, it would be imprudent to state that the Judeans did not have any tradition about the Exodus previous to the 8th century, or that the Northern Israelites did not know any story about Abraham. Nevertheless, it is possible to determine a plausible *terminus ad quem* for the appropriation of a given Northern tradition by Judean scribes, and to study how, from that time on, it contributed to reshape their own cultural memory.

The Reuse of Orthostats and Manipulation of Memory in the Iron Age Syro-Hittite Kingdoms

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Abstract. *This article examines the role of relief-carved orthostats as resources for the creation and manipulation of collective memory in the Iron Age Syro-Hittite kingdoms through the phenomenon of the reuse of older works in later contexts. In spite of the inclination of their material design toward permanence and the application of curses prohibiting interference, orthostats of one ruler were frequently removed, recarved, or reinstalled by his successors, and occasionally we can reconstruct an ideological purpose behind these actions.*

Résumé. *Cet article examine la façon dont les orthostates servent à la création et à la manipulation d'une mémoire collective au sein des royaumes syro-hittites de l'âge du Fer à travers le phénomène de remploi d'ouvrages anciens en contextes postérieurs. En dépit d'une volonté de permanence de la présence de malédictions interdisant toute interférence, les orthostates d'un souverain sont fréquemment déplacés, retaillés ou réinstallés par ses successeurs, et l'on peut parfois reconstruire une visée idéologique sous-jacente.*

1. Orthostats as Memory Resources in the Second and First Millennia BC

For over a millennium, between ca. 2000 and 700 BC, the decoration and protection of building façades with stone orthostats was one of the most distinctive architectural traditions of the northern Levant. Already in the Middle Bronze Age, plain dressed slabs were used to protect the bases of the walls of temples, palaces, and gates at Alalakh, Tilmen Höyük, Ebla, and Aleppo and to create a durable architectural flourish for these representative spaces (Harmanşah 2013: 168–180). The first gate lions, actually large orthostats from which lions emerged, were also made in this period (at Tilmen

Höyük: Duru 2003: 58, pl. 20.1-2, and Tell Bazi: Einwag and Otto 2012). Though relief-carved steles and figurative wall painting were already used in the Levant, it was the Hittites who popularized the application of figurative scenes to the stone façades, as well as to natural rock surfaces (Kohlmeyer 1983; Darga 1992; Ehringhaus 2005).

Given the origin of the orthostat cladding technique in the northern Levant and the survival of Hittite political authority and practices at Karkemish and Malatya, it is perhaps unsurprising that it is in this region that the practice survived the collapse of the empire and continued into the Iron Age (fig. 1). It not only survived, but flourished, as the technique was taken up in nearly all of what we call the Syro-Hittite kingdoms (Orthmann 1971; Kohlmeyer 1995; Gilibert 2011; Harmanşah 2013).¹ New iconographies were applied to this medium (Mazzoni 1997; Gilibert 2011), and an artistic dialogue developed with Assyria (Winter 1982; Novák 2004), which also adopted the use of orthostats and adapted them to its own tradition of narrative art.

In spite of the many political upheavals, population movements, and settlement changes that affected this region, the production of architectural sculpture remained a central expression of political sovereignty and divine authority throughout this long period. Sculpted orthostats thus constitute a “resource,” according to the definition of this term by Collaborative Research Center 1070 RESOURCECULTURES as “the means to create, sustain, and alter social relations, units and identities within the framework of cultural ideas and practices” (Hardenberg, Bartelheim, and Staecker 2017: 14). In this perspective, resources include not merely raw materials with direct economic value, but also tangible and intangible media with symbolic importance, and the valuation of a resource is considered to be contingent and embedded in a specific cultural context. Certain iconographic media, motifs, and styles that originated in the Bronze Age Near East retained enough social relevance

¹ But see Tamur (2017: 40–42) on the diversity of techniques represented among the Iron Age sites.

across the turmoil at the end of this period to be valuable in the construction of Iron Age societies, while others did not.²

The ability of a symbolic resource to shape social relations can be understood in terms of Bourdieu's idea of "symbolic capital" (Bourdieu 1977: 171–183), i.e., the prestige, recognition, and status lent by such a resource to those associated with it, which can be indirectly converted to economic capital. As Harmanşah (2013: 182) has argued, relief-carved orthostats of the Late Bronze and Iron Ages served as "powerful agents who bolstered the king's sociopolitical power." The pious, celebratory, and apotropaic qualities of their imagery were reflected onto the ruler who had made them and who was often depicted there himself. The very production of such large, finely-dressed stones attested to the prosperity of their sponsor, his knowledge of traditional and prestigious architectural practices, iconographies, and sometimes scripts, and access to skilled craft-workers who could carry them out (Herrmann 2017a: 265). In both text and image, these monuments could record an official version of events, actions, and ceremonies, such as military victories, temple constructions, and coronations (Gilibert 2011: 109–112; Harmanşah 2013: 50–66; Herrmann 2017a: 267) and credit a particular person with these actions.³ Moreover, the spaces defined by orthostats created a stage-set and cues for the performance of civic and cultic rituals that were instrumental in the production of political identities and emotional responses

² The transmission of iconographic resources from the Bronze to the Iron Age in the Levant and their repositioning in new social, economic, and political networks is the topic of project A06 ("Bilder des Wandels. Entwicklungen ikonographischer Ressourcen am Übergang von der Bronze- zur Eisenzeit im Ostmittelmeerraum") of the RESOURCECULTURES Collaborative Research Center (SFB 1070) at the University of Tübingen, led by the author and Jens Kamlah and carried out by doctoral students Giuliana Paradiso and Steve Faust. I thank them and my other colleagues in "RESOURCECULTURES" for our discussions on this subject.

³ In an earlier article (Herrmann 2017a: 267), I argued that the production of monuments could have been a means of mediating disjunctive and potentially divisive occurrences in these societies, and thereby preventing them from turning into crises, or "events", in the sense described by the social historian Sewell (2005). Understanding the production of major monumental programs in the Syro-Hittite kingdoms as a response to dramatic and dangerous historical turning points could help explain its punctuated, non-continuous tempo, as noted by Gilbert (2011: 125).

among their participants and audience (Gilibert 2011; Denel 2007; Harmanşah 2013). In the Iron Age, the continuation of this practice and associated rituals may have been further intended to evoke the divinely-sanctioned political authority of the Late Bronze Age empires (Herrmann 2017a: 239).

Alongside these past- and present-oriented purposes, and in common with other types of monument, the production of orthostats derived a major part of its resource-value from the potential to fix collective memory (Halbwachs 1992) and thereby not only produce political sovereignty but maintain it for the future. Their material affordances (Gibson 2014) of hardness, size, and architectural fitting gave orthostats a built-in ability to carry their ideological message far beyond the lifetime of their producers. Monuments such as these “continue to commemorate their own making by invoking the technologies and social relations of their manufacture” (Harmanşah 2013: 154). The often-transformative events depicted were afforded an aura of permanence and validity by their indelible inscription in stone (DeMarrais, Castillo, and Earle 1996: 19; Gilibert 2011: 114). And the imagery could continue to evoke the celebratory performances associated with their inauguration long after the event itself (Gilibert 2011: 115–131; Harmanşah 2013: 119–152).⁴

Moreover, the same material qualities of hardness, size, weight, and architectural fitting discouraged the destruction, movement, reuse, and appropriation of orthostats. Considerable skill and labor is required to alter, remove, or transport large stone monuments, as any archaeologist who has had to deal with one will know.⁵ This

⁴ Gilibert has argued, however, that “their signifying power, if left untouched, tend[s] constantly to decrease: eventually monuments lose their aura and become invisible, particularly if their numbers increase” (2011: 114; citing Lütticken 1999). It is difficult to say whether this phenomenon of attention-fading noted for 19th- and 20th-century cities overcrowded with memorials (Lütticken 1999; Musil 1978: 506) would have been as acute in ancient Near Eastern cities, in which encounters with spectacular imagery would have been a less common experience. Nevertheless, Gilibert (2011: 114) maintains that the repetition of ritual performances in these spaces could have reactivated the monuments and their power to evoke collective memories and emotions and create new carriers of these traditions.

⁵ Parker (2014) has demonstrated that the sheer technical difficulty of transporting obelisks over long distances was a key part of their value in the Roman

would have been even more daunting in the case of orthostats that formed part of a standing monumental structure, such as a gate, requiring the dismantlement of the whole to extract the part. In this way, orthostats served as anchors tying events and people to places (Gilibert 2011: 114; Harmanşah 2013: 50–66) and thereby creating *lieux de mémoire*, memory-sites (Nora 1989). When today we find orthostats *in situ*, especially in Syro-Hittite cities that were conquered and annexed by the Neo-Assyrian empire, it is likely often due to the great trouble required to dismantle them, even when it would have been politically advantageous to do so.⁶

2. The Reuse of Orthostats and the Manipulation of Collective Memory

In spite of their material predisposition to permanence, instances of the destruction and reuse of orthostats and other Syro-Hittite monuments are very common in the archaeological record, and a number of publications have focused on the identification and interpretation of these phenomena (Ussishkin 1970; Winter 1979; Özyar 1998; 2008; Bonatz 2001a; 2001b; Herrmann 2017a).⁷ The identification of the reuse of orthostats in a later structure is obviously more difficult than that of their destruction, as will be shown in the case-studies below. Sometimes there are technical clues, such as the recutting of orthostats to fit a new setting, traces of the recarving of an earlier scene, or the use of a corner block in a posi-

world. Neo-Assyrian reliefs illustrating the great endeavor of transporting a *lamassu* to Nineveh (Reade 1998: 26, figs 17, 53, 54) suggest that this was also the case in the Iron Age Near East.

⁶ We can perhaps see this cost-benefit calculation at Sam'al (modern Zincirli), where the orthostats of the Citadel Gate seem to have been hidden behind new wall segments added when the Esarhaddon stele was erected there (von Luschan, Humann, and Koldewey 1898: 93, 96; Pucci 2008: 43), and at Karkemish, where orthostats inside the Katuwa palace were covered up during the Neo-Assyrian reuse of the building (Marchetti 2016a: 369).

⁷ Even when monuments endure, however, they are subject to constant reinterpretation from presentist perspectives or co-option by other individuals or groups; their meaning is unstable and relational (Alcock 2002: 15–19; Osborne 2014a: 4, 8–13).

tion other than the corner of the façade. There can also be iconographic clues, such as an incoherent sequence of scenes. And finally, there are stylistic clues, such as the mixture of very different styles in one setting, or a mismatch between the stylistic date of the orthostats and the date of the context in which they are found (for examples, see Herrmann 2017a: 245, n. 52).

Both the destruction and the reuse of monuments are symbolically and politically charged acts (Harmanşah 2013: 151; Herrmann 2017a: 264). One could even say that the connotations of permanence afforded to orthostats by their material design paradoxically invited rather than deterred interference with them, because their relationship to the past made them such an effective medium for the manipulation of collective memory. Such potent and durable objects could not be left alone for long. Anticipating such temptations, many Syro-Hittite monuments, including orthostats, were inscribed with curses against any who would disturb or deface them: e.g., “if they shall pass down to (one) who shall (?) them, and shall [overturn] these orthostats from (their) place(s), or shall erase my name from these orthostats, against him may celestial Tarhunzas, Karhuhas and Kubaba, and the Storm God of Mount Arputa and the gods of the river-country of the river Sakura litigate! From him may they sever virility ((or) from her may they sever femininity), to him may they not allot (?) (male) seed, ((or) to her may they not allot (?) female seed)!” (Hawkins 2000: 103–104, Karkamiş A11b+c §§ 21–29).⁸ As a fitting punishment for any who would commit such a crime against memory, the second part of the curse threatens a lack of offspring, and therefore of descendants to remember one’s name.

The destruction and/or burial of monuments is usually interpreted either as *damnatio memoriae*, that is, an erasure or denigration of the memory of an individual, dynasty, or event, or as a magical act intending to harm the one represented or negate the potency of an image or text (May 2012: 2–8). The aims and effects of reuse are more ambiguous. In an earlier article (Herrmann 2017a: 264), I applied Kinney’s (1995: 57) concept of “diplopia,” or “double

⁸ For other examples of such curses, see Hawkins 2000: 86 (Karkamiş A14a §§ 8–9), 96 (Karkamiş A11a §§ 21–27), 109 (Karkamiş A2+3 §§ 10–12), 125 (Karkamiş A6 §§ 25–31), 166 (Karkamiş A27e § 4), and 195 (Karkamiş A18e §§ 3–6).

vision,” first described for the reception of architectural spolia in Late Antiquity, to the reuse of Neo-Hittite monuments at Aramaean Sam’al (Zincirli). This double vision refers to the ambivalent perspective of viewers (whether ancient or modern) who are aware of the past of a recycled work and could alternately deplore the violence done to its original setting or appreciate its employment in a new context. This ambiguity extends to the memory-effects of the reuse of monuments, the simultaneous “suppression and endorsement” (Papalexandrou 2003: 56) of the past. Even as the appropriation of the monument and its imagery symbolizes rupture with the past, it also reveals a reliance on the prestige of the past and traditional sources of authority.

Still, we can distinguish between different types of reuse with different relationships to the associated memories, ranging from pious restoration, with full attribution of the monument to the original sponsor and celebration of the continuity of past and present, to the erasure or usurpation of the past to make a claim for a new order. To get closer to understanding the intention behind individual acts of reuse, we must pay close attention both to the manner and context of reuse and to the historical context of the recycler and the original patron. In the remainder of this article, I will compare the above-mentioned case of the reuse of earlier orthostats in Sam’al (Zincirli) with two later cases of recycling in the cities of Karkemish and Melid (Arslantepe). Exploration of the various ways orthostats could be redeployed after their original production reveals further dimensions of their value as memory resources in the Iron Age Syro-Hittite kingdoms.

3. Sam’al (Zincirli)

The site of Zincirli, ancient Sam’al, in the Kara Su valley that lies east of the Amanus Mountains and runs north-south between the Amuq and Maraş plains (fig. 1), was originally occupied in the Early and Middle Bronze Ages (Herrmann and Schloen 2018), but was then abandoned for the entire Late Bronze Age and Iron Age I and only resettled in the Iron Age II. This area would have been under Hittite control in the Late Bronze Age, perhaps ruled through the

viceroyal seat at Karkemish, and a Neo-Hittite polity likely succeeded Karkemishean control sometime in Iron Age I (Herrmann, van den Hout, and Beyazlar 2016). As Zincirli was unoccupied in this period, the local center of Hittite and Neo-Hittite control must have been elsewhere in the valley. In Iron Age II, beginning around 900 BC according to the most recent radiocarbon dates (see below), the site was reoccupied and fortified by a dynasty of kings with Aramaean names (Tropper 1993: 10–19; Younger 2016: 388–423), who seem to have supplanted the Neo-Hittite regime. A 39ha circular lower town was added to a separately fortified central citadel built on the old, 5ha Bronze Age mound (fig. 2).

The early rulers of Sam'al gave the new city a monumental framework familiar to contemporary cities, such as Karkemish and Guzana (Tell Halaf) (Pucci 2009; Gilibert 2013; Osborne 2014b), consisting of concentric fortifications that defined ever more exclusive spaces and were accessed through gates decorated by orthostats and portal lions (fig. 2). Eight relief-carved orthostats and additional plain orthostats, together with fragments of a huge gate lion, were found in the main gate (South Gate) of the lower town fortifications (von Luschan, Humann, and Koldewey 1898: 94, 111–115, pl. 10; von Luschan 1902: 202–208, pls 34–36). The reliefs include winged bird-headed figures, two facing men, a hunter shooting a stag, a sphinx and griffin, and two horsemen (fig. 3).⁹ Forty more relief-carved orthostats were found *in situ* in the Citadel Gate (Gate D), the only access point of the central citadel on the mound (von Luschan, Humann, and Koldewey 1898: 90–92, 122–127, pl. 13; von Luschan 1902: 208–229, pls 37–45) (fig. 4). These show some of the same figures as found in the South Gate (fig. 5), but also other imagery, such as a procession of gods (fig. 6, bottom), lion-headed figures, and a chariot scene. An internal wall (the *Quermauer*) accessed through another gate (gate E) divided the citadel into lower (southern) and upper (northern) sectors (von Luschan, Humann, and Koldewey 1898: 127, pl. 14), and this gate was likely once decorated by six huge gate lions, five of which were found buried in an enormous pit nearby (the Lions' Pit, *Löwengrube*), as well as two

⁹ See Pucci (2015) for the sequence of the orthostats, which were found fallen from their positions in the gate.

sphinx protomes, also found nearby but out of context (von Luschan, Humann, and Koldewey 1898: 128–130; von Luschan 1902: 230–6, pls 46–48; see alternative reconstructions in Gilibert 2011: figs 37–38). Another gate, not yet located, may have given access through yet another wall encircling the area of Hilani I on the highest, northeastern part of the mound (von Luschan, Humann, and Koldewey 1898: 136), and may have been decorated by the three lion protomes found out of context in the second half of the twentieth century (Duru 2003: 96–7, pls 49, 57, 58; Schloen and Fink 2009: 210). Finally, Gate Q, with two smaller lions, led into the courtyard of the royal palaces at the northern end of the citadel (von Luschan and Jacoby 1911: 270–2, pls 49–50, 65).

The orthostats from the Citadel Gate and the South Gate of the lower town, which form the most extensive and diverse iconographic programs, have been most intensively studied and compared (Akurgal 1949; Orthmann 1971; Genge 1979; Mazzoni 1997; Gilibert 2011; Pucci 2015; Herrmann 2017a; Tamur 2017). There is overlap between these two sets in both style and iconography (fig. 5), but there are enough differences for them to be widely agreed to belong to two different “style groups” and to differ in their time of production, with the South Gate orthostats in “Zincirli I” style (Orthmann 1971: 60–61) being somewhat earlier than the Citadel Gate orthostats in “Zincirli II” style (Orthmann 1971: 61–62, 65; Mazzoni 1994: 331; 1997: 319; Gilibert 2011: 63). For the absolute date of these two groups, three indications have been most influential: 1) the discovery of the orthostats in the two main gates of the city, suggesting that they date to the period of its foundation (e.g., Novák 1999: 199; Pucci 2008: 18); 2) the historical chronology of Sam'al, which places the first Aramaean king, Gabbār, at ca. 920/900–900/880 BC (e.g., Landsberger 1948: 37, n. 2; Hawkins 1982: 386; Tropper 1993: 10); and 3) comparisons with orthostats from Karkemish (the Herald's Wall, King's Gate, Long Wall of Sculpture, and Processional Entry) and Guzana (Tell Halaf, the Tempel-Palast), and with the stele from Terqa (Tell Ashara) with an inscription of Tukulti-Ninurta II (891–884 BC) (e.g., Orthmann 1971: 133–36; Winter 1973: 190–4; Genge 1979: 43–50, 84–6). The general consensus was thus that the South Gate orthostats must have been produced in the late tenth century BC by the first Aramean king of Sam'al

and the Citadel Gate orthostats only slightly later, in the early ninth century.

Recent findings call this chronology into question, however. First, the dates of the above-mentioned comparanda from Karkemish, Guzana, and Terqa have been raised by a few decades, from the early ninth to the tenth century BC, on the basis of new archaeological and epigraphic discoveries and new analysis.¹⁰ At the same time, new radiocarbon dates from the Chicago-Tübingen excavations at Zincirli push its reoccupation and fortification into the ninth century BC. The first Iron Age occupation of the citadel mound begins no earlier than the beginning of the ninth century,¹¹ while charcoals in the fill of the lower town wall give a similar *terminus post quem* for its construction (Herrmann 2017a: 245).¹² These two developments, each pulling the chronology in a different direction, strain the conventional view that dates *both* Zincirli I (South Gate) and Zincirli II (Citadel Gate) within a short period at the beginning of the Aramean dynasty of Sam'al. This problem can be solved, however, by considering the possibility of the reuse of older orthostats at Sam'al and by looking more closely both at the differences between the South Gate and Citadel Gate reliefs and at the nature of their relationship to each other and to comparanda from elsewhere, especially Karkemish.¹³

When we compare stylistic features (including artistic conventions, such as animal markings, and *realia*, such as dress and hair-style) of the Zincirli I¹⁴ and Zincirli II reliefs with other groups of

¹⁰ Masetti-Rouault (2001: 105–10, 128); Dornauer (2010: 51–2); Novák (2013: 296–8); Peker (2016: 48–49); see Herrmann (2017a: 244) for further details.

¹¹ On the basis of not-yet published dates obtained in the 2018 excavation season and funded by Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft project “Urban Landscape and State Formation in Iron Age Sam'al (Zincirli, Turkey)” (HE 7517/2, Virginia Herrmann, P.I.).

¹² This determination was made by Sturt Manning (Cornell University) as part of the CRANE (Computational Research on the Ancient Near East) project funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

¹³ See Herrmann (2017a) for a detailed reevaluation of the dating and character of the Zincirli I and II reliefs.

¹⁴ In addition to the orthostats found in the South Gate, group Zincirli I includes three other orthostats found outside the site itself that are very similar in style: Zincirli K/4 (Orthmann 1971: 61, 550, pl. 66e), Pancarli 1 (Orthmann 1971:

reliefs that date to the fourteenth to early ninth centuries BC, it is plain that both Zincirli groups share some features with the oldest Hittite and immediately post-Hittite reliefs of the fourteenth to eleventh centuries (such as Alaca Höyük, 'Ain Dara, the Arslantepe Lions' Gate, and the Karkemish Water Gate), while other archaic features are absent (Herrmann 2017a: 251–4, fig. 7). Likewise, Zincirli I has some, and Zincirli II has many features in common with later sculpture sets that date to the tenth and early ninth centuries (the Karkemish Herald's Wall, King's Gate, Long Wall of Sculpture, and Processional Entry, the Tell Halaf Tempel-Palast, and the later reliefs from the Aleppo Storm God Temple). This would on first glance suggest that both sets of Zincirli reliefs fall into the middle of this time-span. However, an earlier date for Zincirli I is indicated by the lack of several features that are shared by these later reliefs and Zincirli II. Moreover, Zincirli II is the most varied group, showing earlier and later stylistic features in an inconsistent manner from one relief to the next that suggests deliberate archaism in the execution of this group.

If we then compare the iconography of the Zincirli I and II groups with each other and in particular with the various groups of reliefs from Karkemish, we can see that Zincirli I overlaps most strongly with the Karkemish Herald's Wall and King's Gate reliefs in its emphasis on mythical creatures and hunting imagery, but has almost nothing in common with the Karkemish Long Wall of Sculpture and Processional Entry, which are dominated by chariot cavalcades and cultic processions (Herrmann 2017a: 254–260, fig. 8). The imagery of Zincirli II, by contrast, overlaps with all of these groups from Karkemish, as well as the earlier Karkemish Water Gate reliefs, and is by far the most eclectic iconographically. In fact, every figure found in the Zincirli Citadel Gate corresponds to a figure found either at Karkemish or in the Zincirli I group (Herrmann 2017a: fig. 8, table 2; see also Tamur 2017: 43, Table 2). Several of the reliefs in the Citadel Gate actually appear to be direct copies of reliefs from Karkemish, including the chariot scene, caprid bearer, and procession of gods (Herrmann 2017a: 257–8, figs 12, 15, 16) (fig. 6). This is indicated not only by the close correspondence of

529, pl. 48h), and Örtülü (Kalaç 1975: 188–9, fig. 9, pl. 43; see Herrmann 2017a: 242–3, fig. 6).

the figures and their details, but also by tell-tale mistakes in the Zincirli versions, where details of the Karkemish reliefs were misunderstood (probably from a drawing) and rendered in a nonsensical way.¹⁵

The Zincirli II (Citadel Gate) orthostats are clearly dependent on the Karkemish reliefs, and especially the Long Wall of Sculpture, produced for Suhi II, and Processional Entry, produced for his son Katuwa. These two Country-Lords of Karkemish are dated respectively to the third quarter and last quarter of the tenth century BC (Hawkins and Peker 2014: 110, table 1; Peker 2016: 49, table 2). The Citadel Gate reliefs should thus be contemporary with or later than Katuwa, which confirms their traditional attribution to the late tenth or early ninth century, the period of the Iron Age foundation of Sam'al and its first Aramaean rulers (Herrmann 2017a: 260).

The Zincirli I (South Gate) orthostats, on the other hand, show no influence from or awareness of the Karkemish Long Wall or Processional Entry. They show more similarities, especially in iconography, to the Karkemish Herald's Wall and King's Gate reliefs, but show a number of archaic stylistic features that do not appear in those relief groups (Herrmann 2017a: figs 7-8, 10-11, 13-14). The Herald's Wall and King's Gate reliefs are considered by Orthmann (1971: 31-4) to form a separate, and older, style group (Karkemish II) from the reliefs of Suhi II and Katuwa (Karkemish III), and archaeologists have argued that both sets of orthostats were reused in the locations where they were found, probably by Katuwa (Woolley and Barnett 1952: 193-194, 203; Mazzoni 1977: 12-21; Özyar 1991: 52, 63; Gilibert 2011: 38-50). These observations suggest that the Zincirli I group is not far removed from the Herald's Wall and King's Gate, but likely somewhat earlier, perhaps dating to the late eleventh or early tenth century BC (Herrmann 2017a: 260; see also Mazzoni 1994: 331; Brown 2008: 494-7). The current excavator of

¹⁵ To the examples of these mistakes cited in Herrmann (2017a: 257-8), we should add also the sword of the Storm God relief Zincirli B/14 (Orthmann 1971: 541, pl. 59d; here, fig. 6c). On the original version in the Karkemish Long Wall of Sculpture, Karkemish C/1 (Orthmann 1971: 501, pl. 23e; here, fig. 6a), a dagger is shown on the front of the belt, pointing forward. In the Zincirli version, this dagger has been misunderstood as a sword and placed behind the figure, as is usual for swords, but with the point awkwardly protruding in front of the god.

Karkemish attributes the Herald's Wall and King's Gate orthostats to Katuwa in the late tenth century (N. Marchetti, pers. comm.).¹⁶ However, this does not change the fact that the Zincirli I reliefs are stylistically more archaic than these Karkemish reliefs and iconographically similar, but not dependent on them. If the Herald's Wall and King's Gate reliefs are in future definitively shown to have been commissioned by Katuwa, it may be prudent to shift the estimated date of Zincirli I to the early to mid-tenth century BC, however.

Redating the Zincirli I South Gate orthostats to the tenth century BC would exclude their attribution to one of the Aramean kings of Sam'al and put them in a period for which there is no archaeological evidence of occupation at Zincirli from pottery or radiocarbon dates (see above). It seems likely, then, that these orthostats were produced by the previous, Neo-Hittite regime for another site and later moved to Zincirli upon the foundation of the lower town. On the basis of current evidence, the best candidate for the origin of these reliefs is Pancarlı Höyük, a site less than one kilometer southeast of Zincirli. Three orthostats in the same style as the South Gate orthostats were found at this site in the late nineteenth century and in the 1920s (see note 14 above and Herrmann 2017a: 260–262), and this century a Hieroglyphic Luwian memorial inscription of probable tenth-century date and royal authorship was found on the surface (Herrmann, van den Hout and Beyazlar 2016). Furthermore, these were not the only Hittite or Neo-Hittite sculptures that were reused at Aramaean Zincirli. The large gate lions found in the Lions' Pit in front of Gate E and the sphinx and lion protomes (both finished and unfinished) found here and in the area of the northeastern summit of the citadel are of the same style as the hundreds of unfinished lions and sphinxes found at Yesemek, 23 km southeast of Zincirli (Herrmann 2017a: 246–247).¹⁷ Comparison with similar sphinx and lion protomes from 'Ain Dara, Aleppo, and Karkemish suggests a date in the thirteenth or twelfth century BC for the Yesemek-style sculptures, that is, in the Hittite

¹⁶ See note 20 below.

¹⁷ Two lions from the Lions' Pit were recarved in a later style, but traces of the original paws show that they once resembled the other, more archaic lions (Orthmann 1971: 70).

or immediately post-Hittite period (Orthmann 2002; Mazzoni 2011; Kohlmeyer 2009; Novák 2012). These pieces, too, were evidently secondarily brought to Zincirli from Yesemek itself or other locations where they had previously been set up (Mazzoni 2011: 143; Herrmann 2017a: 247).

How can we understand the reuse of earlier monuments in the context of a significant political rupture, i.e., the assumption of power by Aramaic-speaking rulers in this former Hittite territory around 900 BC? We know almost nothing of the circumstances of this change or the events that led to it. But there are certain signals—the foundation of a Bīt-Gabbāri (House of Gabbar), the abandonment of Hieroglyphic Luwian, and the foundation of a new capital at Zincirli—that a significant break with the past was intended (Herrmann 2017a: 264). The spoliation of the monuments of the Neo-Hittite regime and their redisplay in the new city of the new rulers can, on the one hand, be seen as an erasure of memory, stripping the *lieux de mémoires* of the old regime and obscuring their history. Yet, as discussed above, by appropriating these monuments and their values—the legacy of Hittite royal monument production, the symbolic and technical knowledge required, and their representations of the ruler’s divine protection—the new rulers were at the same time endorsing the authority and legitimacy of the past regime and asserting a “fictive continuity” with it (Herrmann 2017a: 265; see Flood 2011).

The Citadel Gate shows reuse, not of older reliefs, but of specific images copied or “quoted” from Karkemish and local Neo-Hittite monuments. This borrowed imagery was reworked and recombined in a new iconographic program, and an archaizing version of the local Neo-Hittite style was blended with newer fashions from Karkemish. I have proposed that we should characterize this pastiche approach not as a crude imitation of the metropolis by provincials, but as a selective and creative adaptation that made a specific ideological statement. By quoting the imagery of the ancient capital at Karkemish, the new ruler could lay claim to the memory of its legitimate regional authority and its continuing prestige. The blending of these images with stylistic and iconographic elements from the local Neo-Hittite monuments represented in the reused blocks of the South Gate seems to have at the same time asserted a

continuity of both local identity and the traditional divine and political order (Herrmann 2017a: 266).¹⁸ The motivation for the reuse of orthostats and their imagery in this case, therefore, appears to have been a concern to ideologically mediate the political rupture of the foundation of a new dynasty and capital.

4. Karkemish

Now we will turn to Sam'al's model and rival on the Euphrates: Karkemish, a more ancient city that was occupied continuously from the Early Bronze Age to the Iron Age (Marchetti 2014a). After its conquest by Šuppiliuma I in the fourteenth century BC, Karkemish became the capital of the southeastern (Syrian) Hittite territories and was ruled by a branch of the Hittite royal family (de Martino 2014). The royal house survived the collapse of the Hittite empire and continued through the twelfth to tenth centuries BC, when it was supplanted by a line of "Country-Lords" (Weeden 2013). The works of these Country-Lords who ruled Karkemish from the tenth to the eighth century BC are the most extensively preserved and excavated, uncovered by Hogarth and Woolley's (Hogarth 1914; Woolley 1921; Woolley and Barnett 1952) and recently Marchetti's (Marchetti 2014a; 2015; 2016b) excavations in the ceremonial area in the Inner Town at the foot of the acropolis.

Between the early tenth and late eighth centuries BC, the entire area surrounding the Temple of the Storm God and what is now known as the Katuwa Palace, and between the so-called King's Gate, Great Staircase, and Water Gate was plastered with basalt and limestone orthostats (Orthmann 1971; Gilibert 2011) (fig. 7). Many of these orthostats had been moved from their original positions

¹⁸ This argument about the perception and mediation of a political break between the Neo-Hittite and Aramaean rulers of this area in no way intends to revive attempts to distinguish "Aramaean" and "Neo-Hittite" art and material culture, or assumptions of enmity between two opposing ethnolinguistic identities (Herrmann 2017a: 237–238). Rather, I agree entirely with the thesis of Tamur (2017: esp. 47–49) that the styles and motifs used in Syro-Hittite art were not unconscious expressions of ethnicity or nonreflexive habits of tradition, but instead that received traditions were manipulated to communicate ideological messages in specific historical contexts such as the one described here.

and reused (Özyar 1998), though we do not always know when and by whom. The Country-Lord Suhi II and his son Katuwa, who ruled Karkemish in the second half of the tenth century, could take credit for quite a few orthostats found still in their original locations, however. They seem to have added the most to this ceremonial area, turning it into a grand “processional way,” with imagery of a victorious chariot cavalcade and procession of gods on the Long Wall of Sculpture (fig. 6a), and soldiers and male and female offering bearers converging on the Processional Entry to the large monumental building by the King’s Gate.

After Katuwa’s reign, more than a century passed before any new monuments were added to this area. In the early eighth century, Yariri, regent for the young Country-Lord Kamani, added an orthostat-clad projection now called the Royal Buttress to Katuwa’s Processional Way (fig. 7) in order to commemorate the apparent reconstruction of the building behind it and to celebrate the care he and his cohort of eunuch attendants showed to the young king and his siblings (Hogarth 1914: pls B. 1b, B. 4-8; Woolley and Barnett 1952: 194–196; Orthmann 1971: 35, 509–510, pl. 31; Gilbert 2011: 47–49). Yariri is shown presenting Kamani by holding the shorter figure by the arm, and the pair is followed by Kamani’s seven younger brothers and an attendant holding a baby. Approaching them from the other side are seven further attendants, wearing swords and carrying various weapons (fig. 8). Their lack of beards and identification as *wasinasi*-, equivalent to Akkadian *ša rēši*, identifies them as eunuchs (Hawkins 2002: 229–232; Denel 2007: 195). The procession converges on a lengthy Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription of Yariri (Hawkins 2000: Karkamiš A6, 123–128, pls 31–33). The inscription, in which Yariri calls himself “ruler” and “prince” and boasts that his name is known from west to east, from Egypt to Babylon, ends with a curse, saying “If this seat shall pass down to any king, who shall..., whether he shall take away on the one hand a stone from the stones, or whether he shall take away a stele for a stele, or who shall erase my name, or who shall take away on the one side (a child) from the children, or on the other side (a eunuch) from the eunuchs, (for) him may Nikarawas’s dogs eat up his head!” (Hawkins 2000: 125, Karkamiš A6 §§ 25–31).

Yariri was well aware of the danger of successors tearing down one's orthostats, as he had just done this himself in order to erect the Royal Buttress. To add monuments to this crowded space, something older had to be displaced. Not only had he taken away part of Katuwa's Processional Entry to make room for this new monument, it seems that he recycled older orthostats to do it. Two of the eight orthostats of the Royal Buttress preserve traces of their earlier design along the bottom edge: the slab with the baby shows the hind-quarters and one paw of a lion or leonine creature and the one showing the children playing has traces of a bearded figure (Woolley and Barnett 1952: 194, pls B. 7b–8a; Orthmann 1971: 33, n. 29; Özyar 1998: 637). These had been turned perpendicular to their original orientation to match the height of the Processional Entry dado and recarved. Presumably the other orthostats were also recarved on older slabs whose imagery was more thoroughly removed. The lion matches the style of the creatures depicted in both the Herald's Wall (Woolley 1921: pls B 11b, 13a, 14a, 15a) and the King's Gate (Woolley and Barnett 1952: pls B 55a, 56a, 57b, 58a), but the width of the Royal Buttress orthostats (0.99 m) is a much better match for the dimensions of the King's Gate orthostats than the larger Herald's Wall slabs.¹⁹ Both the Herald's Wall and King's Gate orthostats themselves seem to have been secondarily used in the locations where they were found (Woolley and Barnett 1952: 193–194; Gilibert 2011: 39–41, 43), probably by Katuwa, whose building inscription for the King's Gate was found *in situ* on its door jamb (Hawkins 2000: 94–100, Karkamiš A11a, pls 10–12).²⁰

¹⁹ The recent excavations found two partially defaced limestone orthostats forming the foundation socle of the Royal Buttress. These slabs, too, one showing a bull attacking a lion and the other a striding bull, are in the style and subject matter of the Herald's Wall and King's Gate orthostats (Marchetti 2014b: 236, fig. 11). Several other orthostats in the same style have been found in the new excavations of the building behind the Processional Entry and Royal Buttress, in various locations outside of their ancient contexts (Marchetti 2016c).

²⁰ In the inscription, Katuwa states, "While [*or when*] I built the holies of the temple, these orthostats 'came after' me, these gates I 'orthostated'" (Hawkins 2000: 95, Karkamiš A11a §§ 14–16). Hawkins (2000: 98) gives the literal translation "came after" for the verb plus preverb POST-*ní* PES-*wa/i-*, but assumes an interpretation "become available to," "come to the hand of" in his commentary. As

Another building inscription of Katuwa on a pair of basalt door jambs was found in the King's Gate (Hawkins 2000: Karkamiš A11b+c, 101-108, pls 14-17), but these slabs were found lying face down in the threshold, having been reused as paving stones (Woolley and Barnett 1952: 203). The inscription refers to the construction of "upper floors" and a podium for the gods Karhuhas and Kubaba (§§ 15-17). The description of a procession of the gods, of bringing in military trophies, and of sacrifices for male and female gods (§§ 13-18) is suggestive of the imagery of the Processional Entry, and Woolley (Woolley and Barnett 1952: 203) plausibly suggested that these decommissioned door jambs had once flanked the entrance to the Processional Entry building, in the place where the Royal Buttress was later erected. The implication is that Yariri removed the inscriptions of Katuwa that took credit for the construction of the building and its orthostats, replaced them with his own inscription, and concealed the old inscriptions face down in the nearby gate threshold. In doing so, he disregarded the lengthy curse quoted above that threatened punishment from the gods, including a lack of progeny, to any who overturned the orthostats (§§ 19-34).

Yariri inserted his own monument into Katuwa's monumental landscape in a seamless manner, but diverted the original program. The procession of soldiers of the Processional Entry now appeared to be led by Kamani's eunuch attendants and to be approaching Kamani and Yariri (who face them), rather than following the figure of Katuwa (perhaps the one in Karkamiš A13d, as suggested by Woolley [Woolley and Barnett 1952: 243]) or of a god (matching the image of a goddess seated on a lion on the other side of the entrance) into the building.

The Royal Buttress appears to be a case of brazen usurpation of earlier monuments: the complete recarving of one set of orthostats and the displacement and concealment of others, thereby erasing the original attribution of the surrounding monumental ensemble

Katuwa notably does not say that he "made" the orthostats in the gate, this statement may be a further confirmation that the King's Gate orthostats were reused from an older structure (possibly an earlier version of the same gate, which Katuwa calls "these gates (of) my grandfathers" [§ 13]), and could be seen as a unique admission of such reuse.

and implicitly claiming it for a new authority. Unlike the case of Sam'al, however, this appropriation took place in the same city and apparently under the same dynasty of Country-Lords,²¹ without evidence for a major political break. What was Yariri's motivation for, on the one hand, embracing the venerable monumental landscape, and on the other, erasing its history? It does not seem to be a case of *damnatio memoriae* or any animus toward Katuwa in particular, for Katuwa's inscriptions were left in place in several other prominent places, such as the King's Gate itself (Hawkins 2000: Karkamiš A11a) and the Temple of the Storm God (Hawkins 2000: 108-112, Karkamiš A2+3, pls 18-21). Nevertheless, no great respect was shown in the manner of reuse of Katuwa's inscriptions as threshold stones, in a position where feet and chariot wheels would have trodden over them daily.

Though the line of Country-Lords appears to have been unbroken, Yariri was in an extraordinary position as regent acting in place of the rightful ruler of Karkemish. Hawkins (1986: 264-265) proposed plausibly on the basis of his beardless, plump appearance and his prominent depiction of attendants identified as eunuchs, that Yariri was a eunuch himself. This would explain how he came to be entrusted with the protection of the royal children, since he could not have natural offspring of his own to threaten their succession. He was in good company in the early eighth century, alongside powerful, almost independent eunuch governors of the Assyrian provinces of the Jazirah such as Šamši-ilu, Nergal-ereš, and Bel-harran-bel-ušur. Yariri's inscriptions contrast with those of Katuwa and other Country-Lords in lacking any reference to his own genealogy. Like them, he credits the approval of the gods for his rise to preeminence (Karkamiš A6 §§ 1-2, Karkamiš A15b §§ 1-2). This preferment is based not on his descent, however, but rather on his innovative claims to international fame (Karkamiš A6 §§ 4-6), knowledge of twelve languages (Karkamiš A15b §§ 19-21), great

²¹ The newly discovered inscriptions from Karkemish and surroundings now give us a probably complete list of Country-Lords from the early tenth to mid-eighth centuries BC (Peker 2016; Marchetti and Peker 2018). These fall into two chains of direct descent, from Suhi I to Suhi III, and from Sangara to Astiru II. It is possible that Sangara, who ruled in the mid-ninth century BC, was the son of Suhi III, but we have no evidence for their relationship.

skill (Karkamiš A15b § 22), and pious protection and rearing of the royal children (Karkamiš A6 §§ 8–24; Karkamiš A7 §§ 3–5; Karkamiš A15b §§ 13–17) (Denel 2007: 194–197). Denel (2007: 196) further notes the path-breaking nature of Yariri's promotion of the eunuch class at the court of Karkemish in text and image.

Against this background, Yariri's treatment of the monuments of Katuwa makes sense. He had no personal relationship to this by-now-distant royal ancestor, as his legitimacy derived not from descent, but from his fame, skills, and stewardship of the city and royal house. Nevertheless, without a demonstrable devotion to the religious and political order of the kingdom, his position as a eunuch regent would have been dangerously revolutionary (Denel 2007: 196–197). Inserting his strikingly new image at the head of a eunuch cohort into an archaic procession honoring the traditional gods seems to have been part of Yariri's broader strategy of legitimation, a way of bending the city's collective memory without breaking it.

5. Melid (Arslantepe)

My final case-study of reuse, from Arslantepe, ancient Melid or Malizi, on the upper Euphrates River by Malatya, is quite different from the other two. In the 1930s, after a number of sculptures had already been found at Arslantepe, Delaporte carried out excavations at the mound, uncovering still more relief-carved orthostats in what he called *la Porte des Lions*, the Lions' Gate, at the north end of the mound (Delaporte 1940) (fig. 9). This typical double-chambered gate, which was incompletely preserved and had been destroyed in a fierce conflagration, was named after the curly-maned lions flanking the entrance. Four limestone orthostats were found *in situ* lining the inner and outer faces of the southwestern gate jamb, that is, on the side of the gate inside the citadel, and four of the five very similar orthostats that had been found on the surface

over the years are thought to have been installed on the opposite side.²²

Seven of the nine orthostats show a king libating before various gods with an attendant bringing a sacrificial animal, one shows a princess doing the same before a goddess, and the last one shows a battle between a god and a serpent (Orthmann 1971: Malatya A3–A/10, 91–92, 519–522, Taf. 39–41a–c, f) (fig. 10). On the side of each of two corner blocks, a striding lion is depicted. The king and some of the gods are identified by Hieroglyphic Luwian epigraphs, so we know that the king depicted was called PUGNUS-mili (Hawkins 2000: 306–313, Malatya 5–12, pl. 147–151). One of the two gate lions has an inscription giving the name of another king called Halpal-sulupi (Hawkins 2000: 320–321, Malatya 4, pl. 155).

At the time of the discovery of the Lions' Gate, what little was known of the kingdom and city of Melid came from Assyrian inscriptions. In 712 BC, Sargon II had conquered Melid after its ruler Tarhunazi conspired with Midas of Phrygia (Hawkins 1982: 419), and the gate was thus expected to have been destroyed in the late eighth century (Liverani 2012: 332). PUGNUS-mili was connected by early Hittitologists to Sulumal, an eighth-century king of Melid who had allied with Urartu but later paid tribute to Tiglath-Pileser III (Hawkins 2000: 307). However, the style of the orthostats from the Lions' Gate was highly inconsistent with Syro-Hittite sculpture known to date to the eighth century, which showed many similarities to Neo-Assyrian art. Rather, the style, iconography, and dress of the gods, kings, and lions were quite comparable to Hittite Imperial depictions and should thus presumably date to the late second millennium BC (early Iron Age), shortly after the fall of the Hittite Empire (Akurgal 1949: 141; Frankfort 1954: 128; Orthmann 1971: 91–92).

Eventually, with the discovery of additional monuments from this region, the continued decipherment of Hieroglyphic Luwian, and the crucial find of bullae with the seal impression of Kuzi-Tešub, descendant of the Hittite Imperial dynasty of Karkemish (Hawkins 1988), two kings named PUGNUS-mili descended from

²² The fifth orthostat (Delaporte K, Orthmann Malatya A/11) with the same style, iconography, and inscription is twice the height of the others, and it is not clear whether it was incorporated into the gate decoration.

Kuzi-Tešub could be definitely dated to the twelfth century BC (Hawkins 2000: 286–288). Though the phonetic reading of the first part of these kings' name is still uncertain, Hawkins (2000: 307), Simon (2016), and others now hold a reading as *sulu-* and a connection to the eighth-century royal name Sulumal to be very unlikely. Simon (2016) has recently argued instead that PUGNUS-mili (II) is to be identified with the king of Melid called Allumari in Assyrian inscriptions, who was encountered by Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076 BC) on his campaign to the west and who paid the Assyrian king tribute.²³

Meanwhile, even before the early history of Melid was better known, there were already suspicions that the orthostats were in secondary use in the Lions' Gate. Though they formed a consistent stylistic and iconographic unit and Orthmann (1971: 99–100) stressed how well their dimensions fit the gate, Bittel (1943: 232–234) noted the odd, tilted position of the western gate lion (fig. 9), held in position by filling stones, and speculated that it had been refitted here from an earlier structure. When the excavations were continued in this area, first by Schaeffer in 1949–1951 (Schaeffer 1948; Weidner 1952) and then by the Italian expedition in 1963–1968 (Pecorella 1975: 3–6, 65–68), earlier gates dated to the Hittite Imperial period were unearthed below, which were noted as possibilities for the original emplacement of the Lions' Gate orthostats (Orthmann 1971: 100; Özyar 1991: 132–133).

More recently, the Italian expedition returned to that part of the mound in 2008 in order to establish the stratigraphic sequence on a firmer basis. Reinvestigation of the Lions' Gate stratum and analysis of the pottery connected with a contemporary pillared building nearby finally attributed its construction to the early eighth century BC (Manuelli 2010; 2012; Liverani 2012; Manuelli and Mori 2016). A massive fortification wall built in the twelfth century and destroyed in the late eleventh or early tenth century BC was found below these (Manuelli and Mori 2016: 220). The original setting for the orthostats in question was likely a gate connected to this fortification wall, which may be the gate uncovered

²³ Simon (2016: 72) also points out that sign *391 in the king's name that has been transliterated *-mi-* actually denoted *-ma-* or *-mi-* in that period, so that the king's name is just as likely to have been PUGNUS-mali.

by Schaeffer but not published (Manuelli and Mori 2016: 221). The new excavations have thus confirmed that there is a gap of around three centuries between the production of the orthostats and their reuse in the newly built Lions' Gate.

Who unearthed these ancient reliefs and reinstalled them in the new gate of Melid in the early eighth century, and why? Here we have fewer clues than in the other cases, as we are lacking contemporary works and local inscriptions that would give us insight into the ideology and political priorities of local authorities in this period. And it is a puzzle that the rebuilder of the gate did not take credit for this in his own monument.²⁴ Nevertheless, we can note first of all that the reliefs and lions were carefully installed in a manner that was likely close to their original setting, and the construction of the gate itself must have been carefully proportioned to fit them. The attributions of the blocks and the figures to PUGNUS-mili and Halpasulupi were preserved without apparent alteration or addition.²⁵ The manner of reuse suggests that a celebratory restoration, rather than appropriation of older works, was the intention. But what circumstances in Melid incited such a striking appeal to collective memory of the kingdom's past?

The period from the twelfth to the early tenth century BC was the high point of Melid's size, influence, and independence, as attested by the large number of monuments dating to this period and their geographic distribution (see Harmanşah 2013: 50–64, map fig. 9). A cadet dynasty of Country-Lords of Melid (alternately using this title or “king” in the inscriptions) descended from the Hittite kings of Karkemish seems to have gained independence from

²⁴ By its style, the great statue found buried in the gate (Orthmann 1971: Malatya A/12, 522, pl. 41d-e) is too late (late eighth century) to belong to the builder of the gate itself.

²⁵ Based on small differences between the two lions, Özyar (1991: 128) suggests that the western lion (Delaporte A, Orthmann Malatya A/1) was a later replacement for an original that had been damaged or lost. The “original” block (Delaporte F, Orthmann Malatya A/2) has a sloping upper surface that suggests to her its use in a corbeled arch (Özyar 1991: 127), while the “copy” is lacking this. If this is the case, this copy must have been made already in the eleventh or tenth century, as this is the lion that is propped up in the awkward tilted position noted by Bittel, which accommodation should not have been necessary if it had been made for the eighth-century Lions' Gate.

that city in the twelfth century (Hawkins 2000: 282–288; Bryce 2012: 98–106; Manuelli and Mori 2016: 212–216, 233–234). Manuelli and Mori (2016: 229–234) link the depictions of royal offerings to the gods on the Lions’ Gate orthostats to textual descriptions of Hittite festivals in which the king made offerings at various stations, including gates. Discussing the use of royal sponsorship of important public festivals at Hittite-period Emar to build the power of the local kings over that of the traditional city authorities, they suggest a similar process for the construction of royal sovereignty at post-imperial Melid. PUGNUS-mili’s leadership and sponsorship of ritual on these occasions was explicitly linked to traditional sources of authority through the use of Hittite imperial iconography in these orthostats, which further served as “a constant and recurrent reminder of the procession” to any passing through the gate (Manuelli and Mori 2016: 233). The discovery of a number of other orthostats at Arslantepe attributed to different people and in different styles from the same era shows that this period of sovereignty-building through monument production continued beyond the reign of PUGNUS-mili (Manuelli and Mori 2016: 224–226).²⁶

The new excavations have shown that between the destruction of the fortification wall in the late eleventh or early tenth century and the construction of the new Lions’ Gate and contemporary pillared hall, this part of the mound was occupied only by a series of squatter constructions and pits in the tenth and ninth centuries BC (Manuelli 2010; Liverani 2012). The ancient mound seems to have

²⁶ From the differences among the various orthostats from Arslantepe, combining the styles, inscriptions, and technical characteristics of the blocks, Özyar (1991: 127–131, 151, 163–164) divides the Lions’ Gate orthostats into two different groups, assigned to PUGNUS-mili I (Delaporte D, H, and K = Orthmann Malatya A/5, A/8, and A/11), who had the title “*potent king*,” and PUGNUS-mili II (Delaporte B, C, E, G, and J = Orthmann Malatya A/3–4, A/6, A/9, and A/10). In this reconstruction, the second ruler, who did not use a title, or for whom the title “*potent king*” was only added retrospectively with incised, rather than relief, signs, reused the blocks of his grandfather in the gate of that period and produced new blocks in a very similar style. This intriguing, if speculative, reconstruction leaves open the question of who added the incised signs with the title “*potent king*” to some of the blocks. Could it have been Halpasulupi, who used the same title in his inscription on one of the gate lions, or even the early eighth-century recycler of the blocks?

no longer been the center of the kingdom in this period, to which no local monuments can be attributed, though Aššurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III received tribute from kings of Melid in the ninth century, and Shalmaneser III even visited it on three campaigns (Hawkins 2000: 284).

Monumental construction at Arslantepe resumed only in the late ninth or early eighth century, in the period when Assyrian pressure on this region was reduced. In the same period, however, the kings of a newly expansive Urartu to the east took an interest in dominating Melid, seeing it as the gateway to “Hatti” to the west and south. Menua (ca. 810–786 BC) expanded Urartu’s border to the Euphrates opposite Melid and received tribute from its king (Barnett 1982: 343). Argishti I and Sarduri II defeated the Melidian king Hilaruada, respectively in ca. 783 and ca. 760 BC, and the latter took many fortresses in the area and exacted tribute (Barnett 1982: 345, 348; Hawkins 2000: 285). Melid, together with its southern neighbors Kummuh, Gurgum, and Arpad, was then forced into an alliance with Urartu against Assyria, until Tiglath-Pileser III defeated Sarduri in 742 BC and conquered Arpad in 740 BC after a long siege (Barnett 1982: 350; Hawkins 1982: 410). Arpad was annexed as a province, but the other three kingdoms were reestablished as tributary vassals of Assyria for the next few decades.

The new dating of the Lions’ Gate stratum to the late ninth or early eighth century indicates that this period of simultaneous release from Assyrian pressure and new threat of Urartian aggression is the context of the reinstallation of the orthostats of PUGNUS-mili. We know nothing of Melid’s internal political, social, or economic picture in this period, but we can suppose that there was significant disagreement among local parties about how to respond to imperial aggression, whether to cooperate or to resist (cf. Lanfranchi 2009: 136–137 for Que; and Herrmann 2017b: 304 for Sam’al). The refortification of the old citadel of Melid combined with the resurrection of the relic stones of an ancient king may have carried a powerful message of resistance. Hazy memories of the early Iron Age had likely been preserved in part through the rock inscriptions and remaining monuments scattered across the landscape outside of the capital itself. But the visual evocation of the first period of Melid’s independence, in which all the gods of

the land upheld the authority of a pious and more powerful king, could have sharpened and reactivated these memories, turning them into a future vision of glory and independence restored. This was not to be, but the monuments remained.

6. Conclusion

In each of these three case-studies of the reuse of orthostats in the Iron Age Syro-Hittite kingdoms, these memory resources were put to work making the case for something new. At the same time, the differences between them evince the variety of ideological purposes that reuse could serve. In order to imagine the potential motivations behind each case, it was necessary first to evaluate the evidence for the reuse of older works, then to examine the manner of reuse and the manipulations of memory this entailed, and finally to consider the relationship between what is known of the political and historical contexts of the original patron and the recycler.

At Sam'al (Zincirli), the founders of a new regime and new city appropriated the monuments of an earlier authority and emulated the models of the past in the production of new monuments. In doing so, they seem to have tried to mediate this break with the past by demonstrating their knowledge of and capacity to reproduce traditional forms of sovereignty. Something similar is apparent at Karkemish, where part of the city's monumental landscape was erased and supplanted by the monuments of Yariri. Here, the combination of old and new monuments seems to claim a new basis for authority that depended on skill, knowledge, and piety rather than descent, but in a way that avoided threatening the underlying political order sanctioned by the gods. The case of Melid (Arslantepe) stands in stark contrast to the ambivalent relationship with the past expressed by the other two examples. The restoration of the Lions' Gate was apparently a revival of the memory of a glorious ancestor after a period of decline. The political context of transition between the aggressions of one empire and another suggests that this revival was intended to convey a message of independence by invoking the memory of Melid's post-Hittite heyday.

Previous studies have ably demonstrated the role of stone monument production in creating and anchoring collective memory in the turbulent and competitive political arena of Syro-Hittite state formation. The phenomenon of the reuse of relief-carved orthostats shows how, in spite of their material durability, these anchors of the past could be removed to tell new stories about the present. In describing orthostats as “memory resources,” I hope to have highlighted not only their value for building symbolic capital, but also the mutability of that value over time, as the relationship between the memories they evoke and those in power changes.

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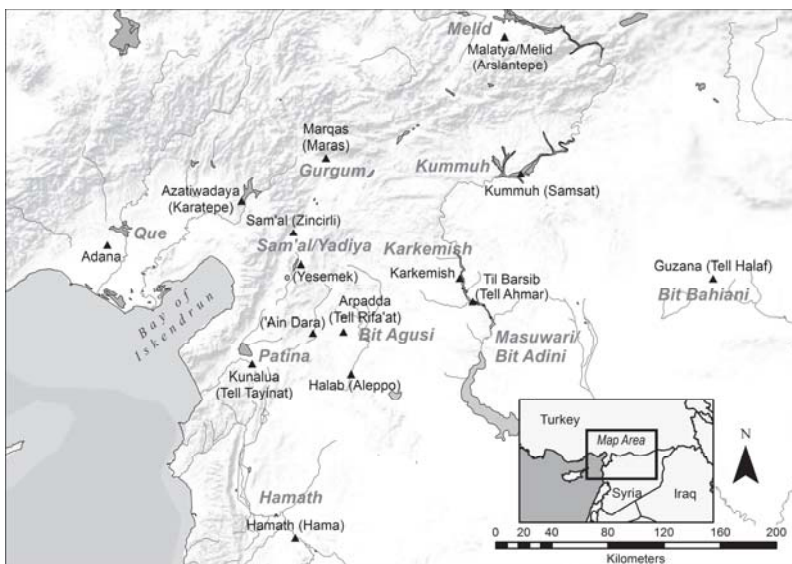


Figure 1. Iron Age II Syro-Hittite kingdoms (map by J. Herrmann).
Names of ancient kingdoms are in italics; modern place names are in parentheses.

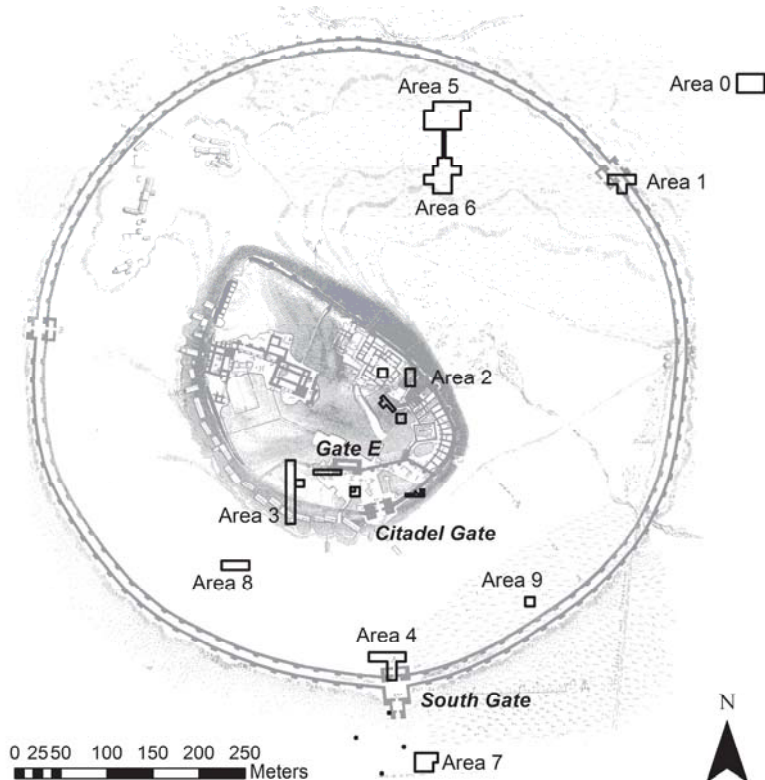


Figure 2. Plan of Zincirli, Iron Age Sam'al (after von Luschan et al. 1898: pl. 29), showing the locations of three of the major gates and Chicago-Tübingen excavation areas, 2006–2015.

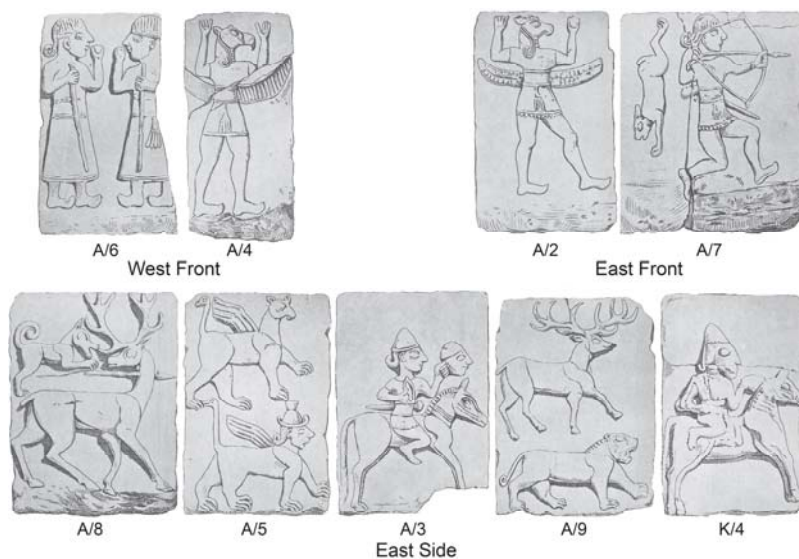


Figure 3. Zincirli I orthostats of the South Gate (after von Luschan 1902: pl. 34). Numbering follows Orthmann (1971: 537–538); sequence follows Pucci (2015: fig. 2).

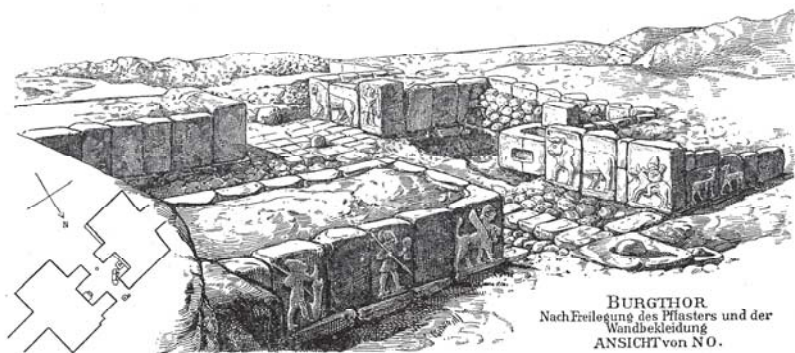
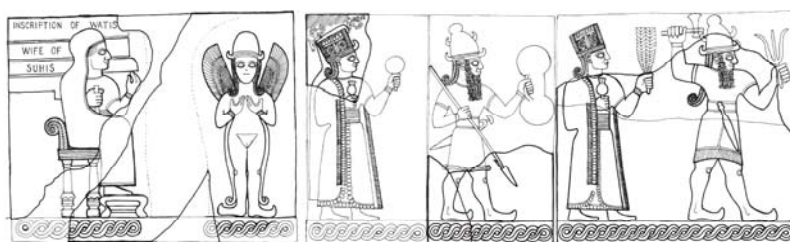


Figure 4. Drawing of the Zincirli Citadel Gate as found, showing Zincirli II orthostats in situ from the northeast (von Luschan 1902: 209).



Figure 5. Bird-headed figures from the Zincirli South Gate (left, von Luschan 1902: pl. 36) and Citadel Gate (right, von Luschan 1902: pl. 42).



a)



b)

c)

Figure 6. Divine processions from the Karkemish Long Wall of Sculpture (top, after Hawkins (1972: fig.4a); courtesy J.D. Hawkins) and Zincirli Citadel Gate (bottom, von Luschan 1902: fig. 92, pls 38, 40, 41).

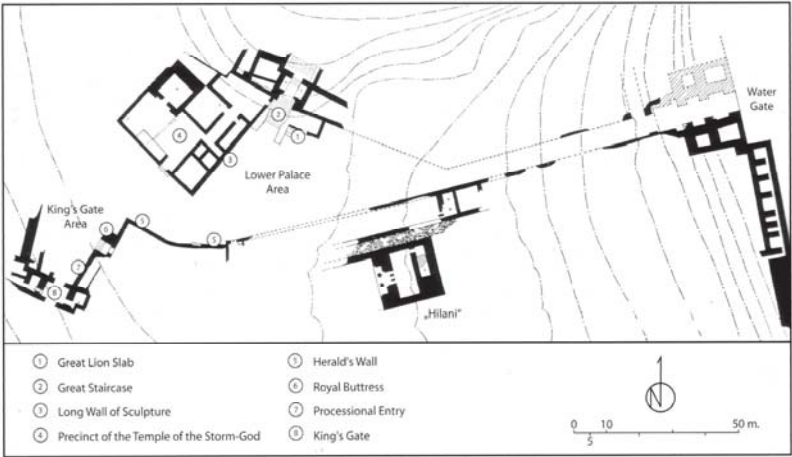


Figure 7. Karkemish: the ceremonial area at the foot of the acropolis mound (Gilibert 2011: fig. 4; courtesy de Gruyter).

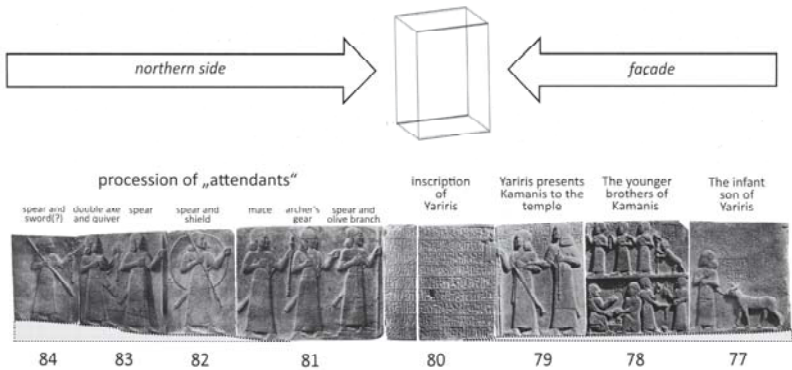


Figure 8. Reliefs of the Royal Buttress at Karkemish (Gilibert 2011: fig. 20; courtesy de Gruyter).



Figure 9. The Lion's Gate at Melid (Arslantepe) from the north (Delaporte 1940: pl. 13.2).



Figure 10. Four reliefs of the Lions' Gate at Melid (Arslantepe) (Delaporte 1940: pl. 21). The two blocks at right are in situ in the southern wall of the gate, while the two on the left have been moved to this position for the photo.

The Construction of a New Collective Memory in Phoenicia as a Response to Achaemenid Power. Material Culture as an “Objectified Cultural Capital”

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1. Introduction

I shall propose here some reflections on the allegation of a new collective memory in Phoenicia as a possible response to Achaemenid power.¹ In fact, during the Persian period, in Phoenicia, material culture seems to reflect the attempt to react to Persian imperial power. Although cultural continuity is clearly perceptible in the ceramic tradition and in many other categories of Phoenician material culture, new iconographies and new architectural solutions spread. These refer (explicitly or implicitly) to the imperial Achaemenid world, and therefore seem to constitute a sort of tangible “memory” of motives well known in the Persian homeland.

As constructing collective memory is part of the broader process of constructing collective identity, in the first part of this speech, we should ask ourselves what it means to use the term “Phoenicia”, and what Phoenicia constituted in the eyes of the Phoenicians themselves, and of the Achaemenid rulers. Moreover, we should ask ourselves about the nature of both geographical and physical boundaries, but also the cultural and “mental” borders of Phoenicia.²

¹ I would like to express my deep gratitude to the organizers of the workshop for their kind invitation.

² These topics are part of a research project carried out by my institute (within the Italian National Council of Researches, CNR, Rome), a project called TCM (*Transformation and Crisis in the Mediterranean*), directed by Giuseppe Garbati and

2. Cultural borders

Sketching out a clear-cut map of ancient Phoenicia which precisely defines borders and limits is not so much a difficult task as a near impossible one. As is well known, the terms *Phoenicia*, and Phoenician “identity” are increasingly coming under critical scrutiny. The so-called Phoenicians actually went by the name of their cities of origin, referring to themselves as Sidonians, Tyrians, and so on. Therefore, for the Persian period, we should follow these locally-based designations, even if Herodotus frequently employs the word Phoenicians, generally referring to the people inhabiting Phoenicia. Anyway, in Herodotus, among the other Phoenician cities, Sidon appears to benefit from special honors. On the other hand, the royal Persian inscriptions do not mention Phoenicia as such; for example, in the Behistun relief, the inscription mentions instead Babylonia and Assyria (DB 6 1.12-7), and the same happens in the Xerxes inscription at Persepolis (XPh 3.13-28).³

In general, territorially speaking, scholars have variously included or excluded different settlements from their “approved list” of authentically Phoenician cities. The Fifth Satrapy, the Transeuphratene, is the only Persian province with defined borders; according to Herodotus it stretches “from Poseidon, a city founded on the Cilician and Syrian border (...) to Egypt” (Hdt., *Hist.* III 91). So how can we pin down the true borders, if indeed they exist, of that region, from the beginning of the Iron age down to the Persian period?

Searching for borders goes hand in hand with investigating the identity and therefore the collective memory of a people, given that the identity-making phenomenon contains in itself the act of demarcating boundaries. From an anthropological perspective, a

myself. A few years ago, with Ida Oggiano, we published a study on the relationship between Phoenicia and the Achaemenid empire, on the one hand, and the Phoenician colonial world, on the other: I. Oggiano – T. Pedrazzi, *La Fenicia in età persiana. Un ponte tra il mondo iranico e il Mediterraneo*, Roma-Pisa, 2012. Therefore, I am presenting here a few notes and suggestions basically derived from these works.

³ V. S. Jigoulov, *The Social History of Achaemenid Phoenicia: Being a Phoenician, Negotiating Empires*, London, 2010, p. 20.

boundary lays down a distinction that is at once both real and metaphorical. Boundaries are continuously being constructed within *inter-* and *intra-*social frameworks, through mechanisms of identification and affiliation. Building collective memory is thus clearly dependent on establishing “mental” borders.⁴

In the past, the dominant view was that ethnic groups were characterized by “a biological component conceived of as blood, genes, and flesh; a similar language”.⁵ This substantialist notion of identity supposes that external representations of a given people coincide with internal representations. In contrast, anthropological approaches advocate representing ethnic and cultural borders as « strategically produced through social and symbolic practices » rather than as objectively given.⁶ The ethnic group has been viewed as perpetuating « its sense of separate identity [...] by developing rules for maintaining “ethnic boundaries” as well as for participating in inter-ethnic social encounters ». ⁷ Similarly, collective memory could also be seen as “strategically produced” memory.

3. A comparative approach

By using a comparative framework, we can briefly refer to the Late Bronze Age cuneiform texts. The socio-political continuity between the Bronze age and Iron age and Persian cities in the Levant, can justify us in assuming that the Late Bronze age texts could advance our understanding of the Phoenician identity even in the

⁴ G. P. Cella, *Tracciare confini: Realtà e metafore della distinzione*, Bologna, 2006.

⁵ T. E. Levy - A. F. C. Holl, « Migrations, Ethnogenesis and Settlement Dynamics: Israelites in Iron Age Canaan and Shuwa-Arabs in the Chad Basin », *JAA* 21, 2002, p. 85.

⁶ U. Fabietti, « La costruzione dei confini in antropologia: Pratiche e rappresentazioni », *Confini. Costruzioni, attraversamenti, rappresentazioni*, edited by Silvia Salvatici, Soveria Mannelli, 2005, p. 177-186.

⁷ W. G. Dever, « Ceramics, Ethnicity, and the Question of Israel's Origins », *Biblical Archaeologist* 58, 1995, p. 200-213.

later periods.⁸ In LBA texts, positive values are attributed to the internal world, and negative values to external areas. Space was thus a symbolic representation of reality, representing a sort of value system. Moreover, since the Iron Age, the previous physical separation between internal and external landscapes had been replaced by a new dichotomy between *our people* and *foreign people*.⁹

In the Achaemenid world, the dichotomy between an internal (positive) and external (negative) reality expands throughout the imperial *oecumene*. Subjugated peoples are therefore ideologically considered beneficiaries of the positive values (harmony, prosperity, efficiency) within the borders of the empire. This Persian “centrality”, with its specific connotation of harmoniously structured space (order as opposed to chaos), was the model to be exported throughout the empire, as borne out for example by the creation of Persian *paradeisos* in many regions. The ideological role of the *paradeisos* was as crucial as its economic one. Particularly when located outside Persia, the *paradeisos* acted as an “ideological representation”.

The Persian transformation of the landscape expressed key aspects of imperial ideology: the king’s dominance over nature (when hunting on the royal estate); the king’s function as a guarantor of fertility; the concept of differentiation combined with imperial unity, symbolized by the concentration at one location of a large variety of exotic and common plant species. The testimony of Diodorus of Sicily, in the account of the revolt against the Persians, suggests the existence of a *paradeisos* or “royal park” in Sidon: « the royal park in which the Persian Kings were wont to take their recreation » (Diod., XVI 41,5).

Turning back to the LBA texts, we can analyze another aspect: how the Levantine cities may have perceived domination by an external power. When independent cities came under the jurisdiction of other cities, this implied a change in the sense of belonging. It is

⁸ « In its organization, Achaemenid Phoenicia persisted in the city-state setup that was so characteristic of the Iron Age periods. In fact, this socio-political arrangement was a “geopolitical left-over” from the Bronze Age (...) and survived (...) due to their deliberate “hands off” strategy of managing the Levant » (V. S. Jigoulov, *op. cit.* at note 3, p. 129).

⁹ M. Liverani, *Guerra e diplomazia nell'antico Oriente (1600-1100 a.C.)*, Bari, 1994.

the case of LBA Siyannu which shifts from the control of Ugarit to that of Karkemish; in the texts (PRU IV, pp. 80-81) we can read: « Since older times the king of Ugarit and the King of Siyannu constituted a unity. As the years passed, Abdi-Anati king of Siyannu separated himself from Niqmepa king of Ugarit and turned toward the king of Karkemish: he is now his subject ». ¹⁰ The two populations would take on a joint collective identity, while maintaining their own distinctive characteristics, thereby developing a plural identity embracing dimensions of both identification and otherness.

Regarding the Persian period, this may have been when Dor and Jaffa were “donated” to the reign of Sidon. In fact, in the Phoenician text on the famous sarcophagus of the Sidonian King Eshmunazar II, we can read that the coastal cities of Dor and Jaffa were given as a gift to the Sidonian ruler by the Persian King: « The Lord of Kings gave us Dor and Joppa, the rich lands of Dagon which are in the Plain of Sharon, as a reward for the striking deeds which I performed; and we added them to the borders of the land, that they might belong to the Sidonians forever » (KAI 14). ¹¹ Some scholars date the inscription to the end of the sixth century. Other scholars linked this gift of lands to the honor accorded by Xerxes to the Sidonians as related by Herodotus, who says that “they sat according to the honor which the king had granted each of them, first the king of Sidon, then the king of Tyre, then the rest” (Hdt. *Hist.* VIII 67). Anyway, this is probably a sort of *legitimization* of the Sidonian presence already established in the Southern Levantine coast. ¹² Even if we cannot fully understand the exact meaning of this territorial cession, certainly in the Persian period there is a continuous transformation in terms of jurisdiction and territorial belonging. Thus, for the coastal cities, the sense of submission to the Persian

¹⁰ M. Liverani, *International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600-1100 BC*, New York, 2001, p. 50; J. Nougayrol, *Le palais royal d'Ugarit IV - Textes Accadiens des Archives Sud*, Mission de Ras Shamra 9 (= PRU IV), Paris, 1956, p. 80-81; E. Pfoh, *Syria-Palestine in the Late Bronze Age. An Anthropology of Politics and Power*, London-New York, Routledge, 2016.

¹¹ Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions*, vol. III, *Phoenician Inscriptions*, Oxford, 1982, p. 107.

¹² V. S. Jigoulov, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

Empire is mixed with the notion of submission to (or dominion over) the neighboring coastal kingdoms. Once again we can see here the emergence of a truly “plural identity”.

Thus, we postulate a fluidity in the Phoenicians’ sense of belonging and perceptions of collective identity. The mobility of borders encompassed ideological dimensions (such as notions of submission, fraternity, and belonging) that were related to tradition, in the sense of things being “as they used to be”. It is therefore tradition that could play a key role in building identity and collective memory. Tradition and a sense of belonging, however, do not refer so much to the “Phoenicians” in general, but rather to each single city-state. In particular, we highlighted Sidon’s prominence in the whole Levantine area.

4. The “Phoenicians” as viewed by the Achaemenids

If we try to analyze how the Phoenicians were viewed by the Achaemenids, the question becomes even more complicated. We cannot go into Achaemenid internal sources related to this question here, but we can suggest that, from a Persian viewpoint, the Phoenicians are never clearly identified as such. Even in the reliefs of the Persepolis *apadana*, which give a broad picture of all the peoples of the empire, we cannot identify the Phoenicians. The famous Twelfth delegation appears to depict a Levantine people (**fig. 1**).

Thus, from a Persian viewpoint, there is no evidence of any focus on an exclusively Phoenician—or even Hebrew—identity: two true “symbols” that were later to acquire great historical importance in our modern view. It is difficult to justify arguments for preferential treatment for Phoenicia in trade or for Judea in religious matters. Phoenician ships were obliged to pay import/export taxes at Egyptian ports, as the documentation from Elephantine attests; the temple in Jerusalem was allowed to be rebuilt, as other

local shrines across the empire: the Achaemenid administration only became involved if strictly necessary or explicitly requested.¹³

Therefore, Persian imperial power in the Mediterranean provinces did not play a direct role in maintaining local cults.¹⁴ We simply cannot infer a Persian policy of special political protection for certain populations. An analysis from the Persian point of view leads us to revise the allegedly specific character of some nations or countries.

5. Material traces of the Achaemenid presence in Phoenicia

So far, we have highlighted the fluidity and plurality of the Phoenician identity,¹⁵ and the scarce Achaemenid interest in highlighting any Phoenician specificity. Now we can review the material traces of the Achaemenid presence in Phoenicia. Iconographic models, acquired architectural elements, foreign elements in the artistic language—in short, all possible traces of a sort of “objectified cultural capital” that is acquired or inherited from the Persian world and from abroad—all these elements are usually interpreted

¹³ T. Pedrazzi, « The Levant as viewed from the East: How the Achaemenids represented and construed the Identity of the Phoenicians and other Levantine Peoples », in *Transformations and Crisis in the Mediterranean. “Identity” and Interculturality in the Levant and Phoenician West during the 8th-5th Centuries BCE*, ed. G. Garbati - T. Pedrazzi, Roma-Pisa, 2016, p. 118.

¹⁴ The Jews of Elephantine, after having turned to the satrap, in 407 BCE get permission to rebuild their sanctuary, having to pay a sort of compensation to the treasure of the Satrap; the Satrap has no interest in defending the Jews, in the dispute with the followers of the God Khum. P. Briant, « Une curieuse affaire à Éléphantine en 410 av. n.è. : Widranga, le sanctuaire de Khnum et le temple de Yahweh », in *Égypte pharaonique : pouvoir, société*, ed. B. Menu, Paris 1996, p. 115-135.

¹⁵ The two approaches, emic (internal) and etic (from the perspective of the observer) should not be confused: therefore, the plurality of the Phoenician identity is viewed as such from an internal perspective. For the emic and etic approaches, see now J. L. Olive, « Reflecting on the Tensions Between Emic and Etic Perspectives in Life History Research: Lessons Learned », *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 15, 2014, online <http://www.qualitative-research.net>.

as an expression of the *cosmopolitanism* of Phoenician cities in this period.

First, we can start from the sanctuaries typical of the Persian-period. In fact, new rural sanctuaries spread in Phoenicia. The main characteristics are their placement near a water source, in the peripheries, in the countryside or around urban agglomerations; and consequently, “isolation”. Another recurrent feature is the adoption of architectural solutions pointing to the “permeability” of space, facilitated accessibility and circulation in the sacred space. The latter suggests a change in the relationship between the faithful and the deity, compared to previous periods, when the temples were less “open” and less permeable. Have these changes been influenced by Persian ideology?

5.1. The *ma‘abed* of Amrit in the Arwadite region

A first example is the so-called *ma‘abed* at Amrit, in the Arwadite region (Syria). The full architectural design of the sanctuary of Amrit is unprecedented, but it clearly comes from cultural interactions with the Egyptian world, and the Cypriot and Greek milieu. In the middle of the sanctuary stands a *naos*, dug into the bedrock. The chapel is surmounted by an Egyptian crowning element (*gorge égyptienne*) and crenellations similar to those used in the Achaemenid buildings at Persepolis. If the *naos* is Egyptian-inspired in its configuration and decoration, nonetheless, for its arrangement inside the basin, it does not find close comparisons in the Egyptian world, where the chapels stand in “hidden” places. The *naos* stands in the middle of a basin, filled by water coming from a source (**fig. 2**). Thus, water plays an important role in the use of the place of worship.

The construction of the *ma‘abed* is dated by K. Lembke to the seventh-sixth century, according to the style of the sculptural fragments and lion’s head gargoyles, found inside the basin and in the

nearby *favissa*.¹⁶ M. Dunand previously dated the *favissa* statuary from to the fifth-fourth centuries¹⁷. Anyway, apart from the *ma'abed* construction date, the Persian and Hellenistic periods are clearly those in which the sanctuary was mostly used. The association between a U-shaped portico, with monolithic pillars, and a pool, is an original, unique solution, as a recent contribution by Ida Oggiano highlighted: this solution is evidently linked to the rituals practiced in the sanctuary (*incubatio*, and other healing practices).¹⁸

It is noteworthy that a few parallels for the *naos* also exist in the Phoenician colonies in the West. Near the sanctuary of *Sa Punta e su Coloru* at Nora near Cagliari (in Sardinia), a fragmentary architectural element has been found, dated to the fifth century; it features the typical Egyptian crowning, with the winged sun surmounted by cobras. This could confirm the resumption of relations between the Western colonies and the Phoenician homeland during the Persian period.¹⁹ A wider cultural *milieu* flourishes, and the cosmopolitan artistic language spreads even in the western countries.

5.2. The sanctuary at Bostan esh-Sheikh near Sidon

The other significant example of a Persian-period sanctuary is that of Bostan esh-Sheikh, near Sidon. This shrine had probably been built in the mid 6th century BCE and restored later. The sanctuary, characterized by terraces, buildings, canals, basins, is placed in the

¹⁶ K. Lembke, *Die Skulpturen aus dem Quellheiligtum von Amrit: Studie zur Akkulturation in Phönizien*, Mainz am Rhein, 2004; I. Oggiano, « Architectural Point to Ponder under the Porch of Amrit », *Rivista di Studi Fenici* XL, 2012 (2014), p. 195.

¹⁷ M. Dunand - N. Saliby, *Le temple d'Amrith dans la pérée d'Arados*, Paris, p. 13.

¹⁸ I. Oggiano, *op. cit.* note 16, p. 191-209.

¹⁹ *Sa Punta e Su Coloru* (Nora) is a site that during the 5th century BCE should be a “sacred place”, strictly connected to the water, at least in a “visual” sense: in this case we are dealing with sea water instead of source water. I. Oggiano, « Lo spazio fenicio rappresentato », in *Saturnia Tellus. Definizioni dello spazio consacrato in ambiente etrusco, italico e celtico*, Roma, 10-12 novembre 2004, edited by in X. Dupré - S. Ribichini - S. Verger, Roma, 2008, p. 291.

countryside, near the Nahr el-Awali. Once again, water plays a key role in rituals connected to health.

Near a water source, the *Ydlal* spring, the monumental podium has been built on one side of the hill, using squared stone blocks (**fig. 3**); the podium was similar to some contemporary achievements of the Achaemenid capital Persepolis, and similar structures are also built in Byblos and Jerusalem during the same period. On top of the podium stood the temple, as some architectural fragments suggest.

These elements (column bases and animal-shaped capitals) refer to the Greek, Mesopotamian and Persian worlds. In particular, the bull-head capitals find close comparison at Persepolis. In some cases, as in the bull-head recently returned to Lebanon from the United States, the style seems more Greek-inspired. In fact, this bull-head, from Bostan esh-Sheikh, has recently returned to Lebanon after being stolen during the Civil War. Together with other recovered works, it was exhibited on February 2nd, 2018 at the National Museum of Beirut.²⁰

In addition to the 6th-5th century statues of the Cypriot type, there are also many statues representing children. In the famous image of Prince Baalshille, son of King Baana, the Phoenician inscription asks protection from the god Eshmun, but the style is completely Greek, and the typology of the so-called “temple boy” is well known in Cyprus. By the end of the 4th century, new structures had been built. In the famous Astarte basin, an empty throne, flanked by lions, very typical of the Phoenician tradition, was placed on a pedestal in a central position inside the basin, rising from the water.

The sanctuary, with the Achaemenid architectural solutions such as the massive podium, the Greek-Cypriot statuary, and elements of the local Phoenician tradition, such as the empty throne of Astarte, perfectly expresses the profound interactions of this period in Phoenicia. If the solution of the monumental podium recalls the Persian world, however, the sanctuary was built drawing freely from the local, Cypriot-Greek and Iranian, iconographic, architectural and artistic repertoire. Nonetheless, as Stucky pointed out, in that period the phenomenon called “Hellenization” only appears

²⁰ <https://tribune.com.pk> published on February 2, 2018.

“on the surface” of Phoenician culture, more as a fashion than a profound acquisition.²¹

5.3. Persian structures at Byblos

Coming to Byblos, some structures were found in the eastern part of the acropolis. Initially interpreted as defensive structures, these ashlar walls were later interpreted as part of a podium, datable to the Persian age. Later, the so-called “Achaemenid fortress” was added, with seven towers. The building on the podium consists of a rectangular space divided into three naves by two rows of pillars, and therefore it recalls the Iranic hypostyle halls. Persian characteristics are also recognizable in few isolated architectural elements, such as the stone slab with a stepped motif (**fig. 4**) that recalls decorations of the *ma‘abed* at Amrit.²²

The famous stele of king Yehaumilk of Byblos, found in 1869, features an engraved scene, in which the seated figure corresponds to the Baalat Gubal represented as the Egyptian Hathor, and the standing figure is the king of Byblos portrayed in typical Persian dress. The inscription mentions all the things that the king made for his goddess: a bronze altar, a gold gateway, a portico with pillars: « And I made for my lady, Baalat Gubal, this altar of bronze which is in the court, and this gateway of gold (...), and the winged disk of gold (...), and this portico and its pillars and the capitals » (KAI 10).

Few traces of these structures remain *in situ*: in the area near the ancient temple of the Baalat Gubal, a paved court with portico

²¹ R. Stucky (et al.), *Das Eschmun-Heiligtum von Sidon. Architektur und Einschriften*, Basel, 2005; I. Oggiano, « At the Courts of Omri of Samaria and Eshmunazor II of Sidon. Objects, Images and Court Style », in *The Changing Faces of Kingship in Syria-Palestine 1500-500 BCE*, AOAT 459, edited by A. Gianto - P. Dubowsky, Münster, Ugarit Verlag, 2018, p. 139-162.

²² M. Rossi, « Biblo in età persiana. Un riesame della planimetria architettonica del sito », *Rivista di Studi Fenici* 35, 2007, p. 57-83. For the stone slab with stepped motif: E. Stern, *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period 538-332 BC*, Jerusalem, 1982, fig. 78.

and a shrine could be dated to the Persian period.²³ The presence of pillared spaces is interesting, as in Amrit. These porticos, unlike the hypostyle halls of Iranic memory, derived from the Greek world. It is important to note, here, that the Phoenician inscription on the stele does not mention the Persian authorities, where instead the iconography of the king shows a close link with the Achaemenid world. Some scholars interpreted this divergence between inscription and image, suggesting that the Phoenician king was forced to show his loyalty to the Achaemenid authority through specific iconographic choices, while feeling free to fully express himself in the Phoenician language. Due to the scarce indications of a strict control exercised by the Achaemenid authorities in Phoenicia, I prefer to suggest that the Phoenician king did not need to mention the Persian authorities, but he probably wanted to appear in Persian dress for reasons of prestige. Therefore, the adoption of Persian clothes could be an expression of the local emulation of the imperial power.

5.5. The coinage in Persian Phoenicia

Lastly, coming to the iconography on coins,²⁴ different iconographic themes, of various origin, spread in the Phoenician centers. For example, Tyrian coinage features a dolphin, a murex shell, and later a “marine deity” or maybe the god Melqart,²⁵ with a mélange of Greek, local, Egyptian elements, but displaying an orientation towards Greece and particularly Athens.²⁶ In Byblos, we see the seated sphinx, with its Egyptian background, and, from the 4th

²³ For the Baalat Gubal temple in the Persian Period, see M. Rossi, 2007, *op. cit.*, fig. 4.

²⁴ The Phoenician cities the coinage started from the middle of the fifth century, probably in order to facilitate exchanges with Greece and the intraregional trade. That is a sort of “managed autonomy” enjoyed by the Phoenician kingdoms: V. S. Jigoulov, *op. cit.*

²⁵ V. S. Jigoulov, *op. cit.*, p. 97. The fact that each Phoenician city could mint money is a clear testimony of the freedom granted them by the Achaemenids.

²⁶ P. Altmann, *Economics in Persian period Biblical Texts: Their Interactions with Economic Developments in the Persian Period and Earlier Biblical Traditions*, *Forschungen zum Alten Testament*, 109, Tübingen, 2016, p. 138-140.

century, the image of a lion devouring a bull, an iconography associated with the Persian *milieu*, and well known in the Persepolis reliefs.

There are numerous samples from Sidon.²⁷ The obverse often portrayed a galley, emphasizing the city’s maritime interests, but the reverse shows a few interesting images. The archer has been interpreted as a deity or a king, or the Persian King, as the archer is usually a portrayal of the Great King in imperial iconography.²⁸ In Achaemenid coinage, starting with Darius the Great, the silver *sigloi* and the gold *Darics* featured the king holding or drawing a bow.²⁹

The iconography of the royal hero appears in Sidonian coinage as well as in the seals. The image on the coins corresponds quite accurately to the representation of the Achaemenid king in close combat with a lion, for example on the portals of the palace of Darius in Persepolis. Therefore, the images of the archer and that of the royal hero fighting the lion are closely linked to the ideology of royalty. In fact, the Achaemenids inherited this ideology from the Mesopotamian tradition, and in the Sidonian coins it signals the celebration of the power and honor of the Persian king. The selection of these specific images does not seem dictated by imperial power but was rather an independent choice of the Sidonian kings. This choice could reveal an attempt to be associated with the powerful empire.

From the end of the 5th century the chariot scene is introduced on the reverse of Sidonian coins. At the end of the century the figure of a follower, an attendant on foot, was introduced behind the chariot, this figure is also known as “le suivant du char royal”; this figure wears an Egyptian crown, or a flat headpiece and holds a vase or *situla* (**fig. 5**)³⁰ According to J. Elayi,³¹ this scene depicts a

²⁷ A catalogue is presented in the book: J. Elayi - A. G. Elayi, *Le monnayage de la cité phénicienne de Sidon à l’époque perse (V^e-IV^e siècle av. J.-C.)*, Paris, 2004.

²⁸ P. Altmann, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

²⁹ J. Boardman, *Persia and the West. An Archaeological Investigation of the Genesis of Achaemenid Persian Art*, London, 2000, p. 174.

³⁰ N. Jidejian, *Sidon Through the Ages*, Beirut, 1973, p. 105.

³¹ J. Elayi - A. G. Elayi, « La scène du char sur les monnaies de Sidon d’époque perse », *Transeuphratène* 27, 2004, p. 89-108.

cult procession with a royal deity (probably a statue) transported on the chariot and the Sidonian king following the chariot. According to others, the king of Sidon is the one transported on the chariot. Finally, according to a third hypothesis, the Sidonian ruler corresponds to the “*suivant du char*”, while the Persian king would be the one transported on the chariot. This last hypothesis seems the most probable, also thanks to a comparison with the images of the Persian king portrayed on the chariot in the Achaemenid glyptic, even if also A. Nunn agrees that « le char des monnaies n’est pas un char royal perse ».³² The image of the Persian king on the chariot, in all his majestic dignity, is remarkably similar to the figure on the chariot of the Sidonian coins.

In some Achaemenid seals the Persian king is depicted hunting from the chariot: for example, in the agata cylinder from Egypt, with a trilingual inscription in Old Persian, Elamite, Babylonian, with the mention of « Darius the Great King » (London BNWA 89132). The image of the archer-king and that of the sovereign carried by the royal chariot are here unified in a single iconography. In the hunting scenes of the Achaemenid cylinder seals, the king is depicted in a manner very similar to the Assyrian prototypes. The Achaemenid royal ideology refers to these Mesopotamian models, not only in the iconography, but even in the tangible creation of the Persian hunting gardens, the *paradeisoi*, in which not only the Great King but also the satraps can be engaged in hunting.³³ In fact, we cannot exclude that, at least in the glyptic and in the hunting scenes, the figure on the chariot may represent the satrap instead of the king.

How can we therefore interpret the Achaemenid-inspired iconographies present in Sidonian coinage? In the absence of traces of pervasive control in Phoenicia by the Persian imperial authorities, such images are hardly the result of an imposition by the Achaemenid sovereigns. Rather, this adherence to the Persian

³² A. Nunn, review of J. Elayi – A. G. Elayi, *op. cit.*, in *Abstracta Iranica* 27, 2006, document 71, posted online on 2 January 2007, consulted 31 March 2019: <http://journals.openedition.org/abstractairanica/5703>.

³³ J. Boardman, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

royal ideology can be explained as a conscious choice by the Sidonian royalty. A few years later, in fact, in the Sidonian coinage, at the time of Abdashtart (the Greek Straton I, 365-352 BCE), we can observe several changes, interpreted as “evidence of Sidon’s increasing resistance to Achaemenid rule”.³⁴ These particular choices, during the Abdashtart’s period, make more clear the previous (and later) adhesion to the Achaemenid style.

5.6. The “Satrap Sarcophagus”

Another example of deliberate adoption of Persian models by the Phoenician sovereign can be found in the well-known “Satrap Sarcophagus”, discovered in 1887,³⁵ and dated to the 4th century—even with different proposals, during the period of Abdashtart (Straton Philhellene) in the middle of the century, or after the 320 BCE. The figure of an enthroned ruler could be the satrap, or the King of Sidon, or, less likely, the Persian King. His dress is similar to that of the figure following the royal chariot in the coinage. Once again, the Sidonian king appropriated Persian imperial iconography.³⁶ The king’s aim is to show a close connection with imperial power; this process of emulation is probably due to his desire to give himself higher status through the declared proximity with the Great King.

6. Concluding remarks

In conclusion, if we try to explain the presence of many Persian features in the Phoenician material culture, we have to take into account the whole framework, with Iranian but also Greek, Cypriot, Syrian and local elements in use. In comparison with the *Hellenization* process, which looks more like a fashion than a deep acquisition, the adoption of certain Iranian elements reveals the creation

³⁴ R. S. Martin, *The Art of Contact: Comparative Approach to Greek and Phoenician Art*, Philadelphia, 2017, p. 128.

³⁵ I. Kleemann, *Der Satrapen-Sarkophag aus Sidon*, Berlin, 1958.

³⁶ V. S. Jigoulov, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

of a new tradition, in which some elements connected to the Persian world become part of the tradition of the Phoenician kings and elites. As already said, collective memory could be intended as a sort of “strategically produced” memory, especially in response to an external power.

In the case of Persian Phoenicia, we can notice a series of factors. Firstly, the different city-states make autonomous choices and are engaged in different ways with the Achaemenid rulers. In Phoenicia, physical and cultural boundaries are fluid, but above all there is the sense of belonging to one’s own city-state, having the royal house and the poliad deities as a reference point. Among the cities, Sidon is the most closely linked to Achaemenid ideology, while Tyre, at least in some phases, tends towards Greece and in particular towards Athens, its important trading partner. Secondly, it is mainly the elite who adopt Achaemenid elements (even if some Persian iconographies, such as the Persian horseman, appear in the coroplastic). The Phoenician kings, and especially the kings of Sidon, created a new artistic language making full use of Persian motifs. In this way, they aimed to emphasize and enhance their high status.

The Phoenician kings and elite are therefore the key players in this process of cultural acquisition. Not only, as Quinn claimed, were they « emphasizing above all the cosmopolitan nature of their own cities and cultural practices »;³⁷ not only do they prefer « to implement and consume prestigious (...) styles and types, uncommon in their land », as Jigoulov stated.³⁸ But above all, by adopting new images and architectural solutions, the Phoenician elite crystallized a new cultural capital, a sort of objectified cultural capital, creating a new shared memory, which is at the same time memory of the Phoenician local tradition and “memory of an elsewhere”, faraway Persia, center of the empire and guarantor of the consolidation of Phoenician royalty.

³⁷ J. C. Quinn, *In Search of the Phoenicians*, Princeton-Oxford, 2018, p. 75.

³⁸ V. S. Jigoulov, *op. cit.*



Figure 1

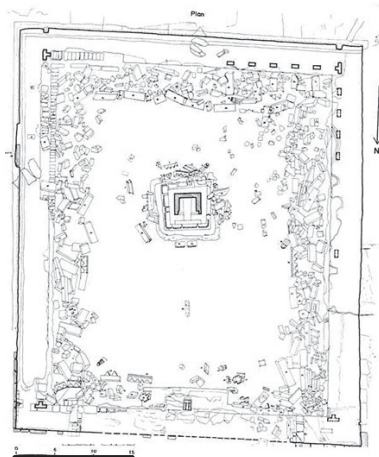


Figure 2



Figure 3

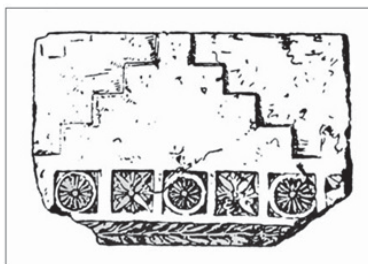


Figure 4



Figure 5